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Pneumatology, existentialism and personal encounter in contemporary theologies of church and ministry with particular reference to John Zizioulas and Martin Buber.

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**PNEUMATOLOGY, EXISTENTIALISM AND PERSONAL ENCOUNTER
IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGIES OF CHURCH AND MINISTRY,
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO JOHN ZIZIOULAS
AND MARTIN BUBER**

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Many modern theologians have approached their task of explaining the divine-human relationship in terms of personal encounter and existential event. This is in marked contrast to the historical western perspective, defined by Boethius, in which the person, divine or human is approached in an essentialist and substantialist way. The communion of Christians, the Church, is also explained in these interpersonal terms. Zizioulas sets this perspective within an ontological context, arguing that the essence of the Godhead is personal unity, and that therefore the quest for communion is an essential aspect of the religious quest. From the personal unity of the Godhead, a communion of persons, flows the unity of Jesus Christ with the communion of persons which is the Church. Like all works of God, this communion of persons is achieved by the reconciling work of the Holy Spirit. This pneumatological approach brings out the existential aspect of the Church. Life in the Church as a way of being, becomes an existential event mystically identified with God's way of being.

In focusing upon the above the locus of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church is emphasised. The philosophical vocabulary of Buber can be seen to have influenced the ecclesiology of Zizioulas and his concept of the interhuman gives greater definition to the locus. This locus is the existential relations between persons arising from their common participation in the mystery of Christ. Buber's definition of the "interhuman" is helpful in this context since it gives greater definition to the locus: Zizioulas' "event of communion". Buber's thinking on the interhuman or interpersonal dialogue is represented by him as the I-Thou relation, which stands for the quality of the relation brought into existence by the person's attitude and response. This is neither an affective state, nor a sociological category, but an existential relation between persons. Thus the interhuman is the locus of the reconciling work of the Spirit, namely, the

opening up being so that it may become relational in order to reverse the autonomy of individuals, a major feature of contemporary life and philosophy, and so bring about community.

This understanding of the nature of being as communion, as dialogue, as existential event, also facilitates, through the use of Buber's categories, a dialogue with those non-christian philosophers whose emphasis is on the existential event - nature of life in this world and encounter as a basic mode of being human.

Following on from this, the opening up of being ontologically grounded in God also involves the dynamics of human relations in their social and cultural setting. Human beings are active agents in this process. It is within this locus of the Spirit's activity that the transactions of the people of God become efficacious for their work of salvation in mission to one another and to the world. Buber's interpersonal categories expand and illuminate this dialogic process and assist our understanding of ministry in the Church as a form of mediation. In assisting the latter, Buber's categories have practical relevance in terms of ecclesiastical polity. Ministry has rarely been regarded as truly mutual nor been seen in its proper psycho-social and cultural contexts. In the community of the Church the dialogic relationships with Christ and other Christians have, however, a definite structure, reflecting the trinitarian structure of the Godhead. The function of ministry becomes in this analysis the facilitating of this "opening up" of the being of christians to one another within the koinonia, facilitating the operation of the relational web which is the structure of the Church.

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INTRODUCTION

PERSON IN THE CHURCH

It is clear that the theology of the Church and Ministry have been major preoccupations in the world-wide Church in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The ecumenical movement has largely come about as a response to this. Fr. Yves Congar (Chrétiens Désunis: Principes d'un oecumenisme catholique 1939 Eng. tr. Divided Christendom, London, Bles, 1939 p.48) says:

"If we consider Protestantism and other dissident bodies as collective realities, we encounter, as it seems, a problem that is the problem of ecumenism."

But ecclesiology was already a nineteenth century preoccupation. Church establishment and the notion of Christendom remained the standard form in the nineteenth century, but it was one of the significant changes of the period that all over Europe, in Roman Catholic, as well as Protestant countries, the state moved to bring union to an end, setting up secular institutions and permitting a degree of religious competition, which in the past had been regarded as injurious to the state's own interests. This new latitude of thinking was no doubt much influenced by the Enlightenment which produced new questioning of accepted views and doctrines. In a century which inherited so firm a tradition of scriptural and ecclesiastical authority such a method of thought as René Descartes (1596-1650) was uncongenial and encountered much hostility from theologians. (See Copleston F. A History of Philosophy Vol. IV, Descartes to Leibniz, London, Burns Oates, 1969 pp.63-89). Descartes' philosophical system was based on preliminary universal doubt. His ideas

bring out clearly that his approach depends upon what is evident to the individual and it is this individualist basis of Descartes' philosophy that is notable. (See Hamlyn D. W. A History of Western Philosophy, London, Penguin, 1987 pp. 135-145) Furthermore with his doctrine of substances, Descartes was able to quantify and mechanise the whole of nature. Descartes' thinking has been influential in the intellectual sphere ever since and has succeeded in placing human beings at the centre of the philosophical stage. This had far reaching effects on thinking in general, since the individual person was elevated and the corporate diminished. As a corporate institution the Church was bound to suffer from this individualistic and mechanistic view of the world. It was one of the profound insights of the Danish theologian Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) that he recognised not only that Christendom had collapsed but also that one could not make a successful programme out of a desire to restore the religious ancient regime. (See Coppleston F. A History of Philosophy Vol. VII, 'Fichte to Nietzsche' pp. 335-351, also Vidler, A. R. The Church in an Age of Revolution, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1961, pp. 201-211) Ecclesiological doctrine was central to Victorian theological perplexities, because after the French Revolution no-one knew what the role of the Church was in a modern state. There was a determination to find a supernatural sanction for the Church's visible being, a sanction which, however dependent on the Bible for its intellectual backing, might also serve as an answer to German historical-critical re-assessments of the Scriptures. It is against this background that the declaration of Papal Infallibility at the First Vatican Council (1870) should be seen. The Church's Infallibility, with the mouthpiece of an infallible pope, became a bulwark against rationalism.

At the opposite end of the scale we discover a very different conception of Christianity and the Church in the Liberal Protestant theologians, among whom the most influential were F. E. D Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889). (See Vidler A. R. The Church in an Age of Reason, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1961, pp.101-111, also Kent J. H. S. The Nineteenth Century in Cunliffe-Jones H. A History of Christian Doctrine, Edinburgh, Clark, 1978). Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930) was particularly influential in his ideas concerning the Church. Harnack's anti-dogmatic liberalism led him to an individualistic praise of freedom which was attractive to many in the late nineteenth century.

There was, likewise, a liberal development in the Roman Church in the so-called Modernist movement, whose chief advocates were Alfred Loisy (1857-1940) and George Tyrell (1861-1909). (See Vidler A.R. A Variety of Catholic Modernists, Cambridge University Press, 1970). Their views of dogma, however, were based on a thoroughgoing notion of the development of doctrine, which radically opposed Harnack's stance.

It is noteworthy that throughout the nineteenth century these ecclesiological speculations almost exclusively focused upon Christology; there was little interest in Pneumatology. The work of the Holy Spirit was subsumed under the abiding influence of Christ. (See Aubrey A. E. "The Holy Spirit in Relation to the Religious Community" in Creed J. M. & Driver G. R. Eds. Journal of Theological Studies, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1940, pp.1-13) The workings of the Holy Spirit were internalised and individualised in line with the philosophical trends of the period, a process that had been evolving over a considerable period of time. (See Spinoza The Light of a Candlestick & Canons of the Synod of Dort 5 IX) The Holy Spirit is seen

as working upon individual persons, so that gradually "seekers" find themselves drawn into groupings. It was such ideas that led to the formation of the Society of Friends. It was Voltaire (in Essai sur les mœurs) who sought an explanation of historical events in a type of group spirit. Schleiermacher took up this theme in relation to believers (in Christian Faith) but added the dimension of grace. It was Ritschl (in Montesquieu Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung) who stressed that the individual cannot experience justification and reconciliation apart from the community of the Church. In this unproductive period the only breakthrough was furnished by the Anglo-Catholic acceptance of the Eastern view which gave the Holy Spirit an independent relation to the Church (See The Report on the Resolutions of the Bonn Conference of 1875, London, Rivingtons, 1876). From an historical perspective it is worth noting that this conference produced a revival in pneumatological studies within the Anglican communion. A foretaste of the direction of pneumatological studies is given in the article by Aubrey previously mentioned. He asserts that the Holy Spirit is responsible for the creation and sustaining of the Church and he quotes Emil Brunner Vom Werk des Heiligen Geistes and adds a pertinent comment relevant to our theme (ibid);

"Can this furnish a basis for resolving the dilemma of individualism and collectivism in the religious community. Is it conceivable that here we have a doctrine which is the hub of the whole contribution of Christian thought to the cultural problems of our time?"

After the First World War the context of the discussion on the nature of the Church changed as the ecumenical movement grew with its vision of one Church of Christ according to the will of God. A major point that arises is that the Church should not be thought of as secondary to the gospel. The personal encounter of an individual, his

communion with God in Christ, comes along with that individual becoming a member of the body. Many Christian duties, such as worship and service, can only be performed corporately. It is therefore possible to argue that because the Church is Christ's not ours, the essential structure is divinely determined. While it is true that the New Testament provides no fixed pattern, worship, word, sacraments, ministry and pastoral care are all part of what the Church is about. The ideas in this paragraph are not personal, but a synopsis of ideas put forward in the 1963 Report of the Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church (London, SPCK/Epworth, 1968), and they typify the ecclesiology of a generation.

Of these new perspectives consensus appears to be emerging concerning the idea of the Church as communion, *koinonia*. This has profound implications for ecclesiology and the theological conceptions of ministries and how these function in practice.

Koinonia is a New Testament and Pauline concept. Attention has been drawn to the fact that Paul's perspective in this regard is thoroughly Hebraic in outlook. (See Davies J. C. Church in Richardson A. Ed. Dictionary of Christian Theology, London, SCM Press, 1969, p.66) The Hebrew, unlike the Greek, is not interested in things in themselves but only in things as they are called to be. (See Jacquemin E. Will of God in Leon-Dufour X. Dictionary of Biblical Theology 2nd Edition, London, Chapman, 1973 pp.653-655). The meaning of an object therefore does not lie in its analytical and empirical reality, but in the will that is expressed by it. (See Behm J. Anamnesis in Kittel G. Ed. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. I, Michigan, Eerdmans 1964 p.348 and Anamnesis in Rahner K. & Vorgrimler H. Concise Theological Dictionary, New York, Herder, 1965 p.19)

The Church is the Body of Christ because its true nature rests upon its relation to God's purpose. With this Hebraic emphasis on intentionality, it is possible to say that in the New Testament the Greek word *koinonia* expresses the relationship of the christian with the true God revealed by Jesus and that of christians among themselves. It is this notion of *koinonia* which is central to the arguments of the Final Report of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission (London, CTS/SPCK, 1982) and forms that Commission's most important contribution to the present ecumenical debate. Many of the twentieth century theologians who have reflected on this concept of *koinonia* have also, and alongside it, approached dogmatic theology in a phenomenological way and in terms of a personalist analysis. It is the intention of this essay to demonstrate that *koinonia* and other historical and contemporary themes can be usefully linked by the concepts of interpersonal existential subjectivity and personal encounter linked to a thoroughgoing and essentially practical understanding of the fellowship which flows from our personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Indeed this thesis could be stated more strongly by asserting that the Church in general, and specifically as communion, can only be understood in any way which is relevant to human beings in the categories of personal existence, personal encounter and intersubjectivity.

Indeed, *koinonia* can be analysed in terms of interpersonal subjectivity both at the human and divine levels. Theologians have been guided in this respect by the conviction that theology must deal honestly with the actual conditions of human existence. For these theologians, God's revelation of himself follows the course of human experience. Of course, it transcends them, in that it does not simply emerge

from subjective human experience, but it can only be perceived in and through a long process of experience.

Another factor related to this is at the personal level of the perception of faith. It can be said that some theologians are tempted to operate in a vacuum, and furthermore that little theology is useful if it is not essentially pastoral. This seems particularly the case with Ecclesiology and the doctrine of ministry. Unless ordinary Christian people are persuaded by relevant ecclesiological ideas, these will remain at the abstract level, and largely irrelevant to their lives. And they will be irrelevant to their lives unless they can see in their own Christian experience how these doctrines can assist them to be better Christians and to enter more fully into the faith-event.

The divisions and unhappiness of the yesteryears of controversy were exacerbated by a tendency not to listen to what others were saying, not to attempt to meet them in their *sitz im leben*, but to beat down their views with theological clubs. The result was that no-one was persuaded. Indeed what exchanges took place only widened the chasm that had developed.

Ecclesiology is most relevant to the above, especially an understanding of *koinonia* in relation to the divisions of the past, but ecclesiology will only be seen as relevant to church members and wider society if it affects how churches function in terms of people's experiences of the faith-event that really matters. And a substantial part of the experience is how they relate to one another, the world beyond the Church and, in particular, how they relate to their ministries in the light of that faith-event and mission.

This pragmatic way of thinking has a good historical example in John Wesley who challenged the accepted ways of thinking about ecclesiastical institutions. (See Kent J.

H. S. The Doctrine of the Church in the Whole Period in Cunliffe-Jones H. A History of Christian Doctrine, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1978 p.520 ff.; Moorman J. R. H. A History of the Church in England, London, Black, 1953 pp.297-308; Davies R. E. Methodism, London, Penguin, 1963, pp.122-131 also Schmidt M. John Wesley - A Theological Biography Vol. II, London, Epworth, pp.127-151.)

His pragmatic approach is particularly valid in respect of the relationship between clergy and laity. A close examination of the issues here ^{is} long overdue in the ecumenical pilgrimage. This relationship, and the theological issues surrounding it, might very well be described as the coal-face of Ecclesiology, where theory becomes practice. For example, the failure to address the issues of the three-fold ministry and episcopal ordination largely led to the failure of the Anglican/Methodist Reunion Scheme. Indeed these issues are still very relevant to relations between the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion and many of the Protestant Churches. So many of the bilateral dialogues beg the whole question, for example, of the origins of priesthood, lay and ordained, and perpetuate an unfortunate and disabling dualism. (See Avis P. Christians in Communion). This pragmatic approach is also well expressed by Jürgen Moltmann. (See The Church in the Power of the Spirit, London, SCM Press, 1977 p.317 ff.).

He points out that living in the friendship of Jesus is not purely private, and is not simply about togetherness; nor is it about comfortable feelings. It has this 'public' face, it has a corporate nature, it is about word and sacrament, institution and hierarchy. It is about making communion or fellowship 'real' in the Church.

The principle of communion has been particularly important to Orthodox Christians and illuminates all their theological thinking. Indeed one can say that koinonia, as a

theological theme has the potential to bring together both Eastern and Western theologies. John Zizioulas (born 1931), a member of the Orthodox Church and one of its leading theologians, stands for a wholly relational understanding of God, Christ and the Church which brings out the existential experience of the Holy Spirit's working in the Church. He gives an incisive vision of the Orthodox way (Zizioulas J. D. Being as Communion, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985 p.15):

"The Church is not simply an institution. She is a mode of existence; a way of being. The mystery of the Church, even in its institutional dimension, is deeply bound to the being of man, to the being of the world and to the very being of God. In virtue of this bond, so characteristic of patristic thought, ecclesiology assumes a marked importance, not only for all aspects of theology, but also for the existential needs of man in every age.

In the first place, ecclesial being is bound to the very being of God. From the fact that a human being is a member of the Church, he becomes an 'image of God', he exists as God Himself exists, he takes on God's 'way of being'. This way of being is not a moral attainment, something that man accomplishes. It is a way of relationship with the world, with other people and with God, an event of communion, and that is why it cannot be realised as the achievement of an individual, but only as an ecclesial fact.

However, for the Church to present this way of existence, she must herself be an image of the way in which God exists. Her entire structure, her ministries etc. must express this way of existence. And

that means, above all else, that the Church must have a right faith, a correct vision with respect to the being of God. Orthodoxy concerning the being of God is not a luxury for the Church and for man: it is an existential necessity."

In asserting that the Church is a "way of being" Zizioulas is making clear that we are discussing an indissoluble or holistic bond between God, the Church and the world in which Christians live and work. In stressing the existential relationship with the world, with other people and with God in an event of communion, Zizioulas is subsuming many of the ecclesiological issues of the last two hundred years. He lays bare the theological inadequacy of post-Enlightenment Western ecclesiology, a defensive retreat in the face of secularism, rationalism and individualism. He underpins the Ecumenical Movement, especially the forces which shaped it. His approach is thoroughly biblical in stressing the personal and it is thoroughly liturgical in focusing upon the eucharist and it is relevant to the Church's mission in a changing world because it is truly catholic.

At the same time one apprehends the gulf which appears to exist between this holistic or collectivist approach and the excessive individualism of much Western theology since the Middle Ages. For example, if one could state, concerning the doctrine of Justification, as Zizioulas does in another context (Zizioulas p. 15) "it cannot be realised as the achievement of an individual, but only as an ecclesial fact", many of the controversies of the last three hundred and fifty years might have been avoided. I hope to demonstrate that this gulf can be bridged, and that there already exists in some Western philosophy and theology a predisposition to the Orthodox perception of the Church as communion, an existentially participatory way of being.

I hope to demonstrate that this gulf can be narrowed, that this Eastern idiom can and must be interpreted in a more Western idiom, and that such a translation can throw great light on the mission of the Church in the twentieth and twenty first centuries - that same mission as the first century "to make disciples of all nations".

It is this critical aspect of the mission of the Church which establishes the centrality of ecclesiology to a dialogue with humanism. The Church is seen as being irrelevant to secular life, and is therefore dismissed. Its divisions and rivalries are regarded as *prima facie* proof of its inauthenticity. Zizioulas certainly provides that important link between an intellectual foundation (based, in his own case, on patristic theology) and praxis - authentic Christian living. But at the same time, it should be remembered that much modern philosophy is also about our reflection upon daily life experiences, and the problems of contemporary existence.

It may very well be that the theological approach sketched above will be more likely to provide a bridge to dialogue, based on a personalist and existentialist analysis, but without the excessive individualism of some existentialist thinkers. In the latter half of the nineteenth century and in this century there has been an influential group of philosophers for whom experience of being a person is central to their philosophising.

John Macquarrie says:

"The philosophers of personal being represent a type of thinking which has a long history, and which has also been very widespread. We can trace its various strands back into Jewish and Hebrew reflection; or in Western thinkers like Pascal and St Augustine; or in the novels of Dostoevsky and some ideas of Russian religion. The most immediate influence with which to reckon, however, was the rediscovery in the

present century of the thought of Kierkegaard He has really come into his own only in the twentieth century, and it would be difficult to over-estimate his influence on the religious thought of our time" (Macquarrie J. Twentieth Century Religious Thought, London, SCM, 1963 p.194).

Macquarrie lists Martin Buber, Karl Heim, Miguel de Unamuno, Jose Ortega y Gasset, Nicholas Berdyaev, Sergius Bulgakov and John Macmurray as representative of this personalist approach. He does not consider the above as existentialists in the strict sense, whereas he marks out for special note from an existentialist viewpoint Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Jean-Paul Sartre, Gabriel Marcel and Louis Lavelle. I shall return to some of these at a later stage. In the same work (op.cit,pp.362-369) he points out that the personalist and existential approaches have greatly influenced such theologians as Rudolf Bultmann, Friedrich Gogarten, Fritz Buri and Paul Tillich.

It will be the contention of this essay that, of the philosophers and theologians mentioned above, the thinking of Martin Buber ¹ can particularly help provide a bridge between much modern philosophy and sociology and Christian reflection upon the nature of God, the Church as communion and the wider human community. Buber's own distinctive position consists in a frank acceptance of that personal form of being for which man is destined, a being which lives in dialogue or in person-to-person relations:

"Being true to the being in which and before which I am placed is the one thing that is needful." (Pointing the Way - Collected Essays, New York, Harper, 1957 pp.9-10).

¹ 1878-1965, Professor at Frankfurt, 1923-33; Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1938-1951. He had a long association with the cultural side of the Zionist Movement.

As Buber sees it, the ills of the contemporary world spring from the injury that has been done to the essentially personal nature of humankind, not only as between person and person but also as between person and God. So he becomes the prophet who proclaims that "the hope for this hour depends upon the renewal of dialogical immediacy." (op.cit.p.228).

Hans Urs von Balthasar asserts that this notion of personal religion is essential to the renewal of Christianity. He says (Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961 p.25):

"All these renewals are undoubtedly a return to the kindling fire of 'the personal', to personal religion, but equally they are always a return to personal religion in its Christian form - the 'I am' texts of Jesus - which remain unacceptable to Buber."

Even with the theological thinking, no great thought has been given to the philosophical background to the concept of koinonia. If theologians have not even attempted to put their ecclesiological thinking into a philosophical framework (and this could not be alleged of Zizioulas) or to translate ecclesiological categories into twentieth century thought patterns, they are hardly likely to be equipped to relate their thinking to contemporary philosophers and others in a meaningful form for these persons. I propose to demonstrate that Buber can be a useful bridge to understanding the notion of koinonia in a wider context.

But in addition to this it is worth noting that Buber represents something wider than the subject in hand. He is also the prophet of dialogue between Jews and Christians. Balthasar (ibid p.12) says:

"Buber's aim has been to make Judaism understandable and its demand peremptory. That is why the Christian really has no choice; he cannot refuse him a hearing whether he finds the work sympathetic or not. The subject itself obliges him to reply."

Zizioulas demonstrates that the essentially relational thinking of *koinonia* is important to Orthodox Christians. But at the same time he acknowledges that there exists a gulf between their holistic and collectivist thinking and the individualism of much Western philosophy and theology. But he also notes that at the same time "it provokes and invites contemporary theology to work with a view to a synthesis between the two theologies, Eastern and Western." (Zizioulas p.26). Zizioulas' relational mode of theologising has its links in the West with theologians such as Rahner, Schillebeeckx, Tillich and Moltmann who have, in different degrees, emphasized interpersonal subjectivity and personal encounter. By his own admission (made to the author in a personal discussion in 1993) Zizioulas has also been considerably influenced by Buber, especially in the latter's earlier, formative years as a theologian.

Indeed Zizioulas makes specific reference to Martin Buber and I and Thou. (Zizioulas p.17) But he is not alone here. Much earlier R. Gregor Smith, the translator of I and Thou, ("What is Real Life?" in Vidler A. R. Ed. Theology Vol. XLVII, London, SPCK, 1944 p.206) had asserted:

"If you begin, as Buber does, with relation, with God speaking to you, God sustaining this creation, then you move all the time within the relation and finally in the relation you come to dwell. Nothing can be proved in this; the most that can be done is that the relation may be confirmed in action. Meaning and value stream from the life which is

bound up in relation with God - through worship, through prayer, through the multitudinous ways offered to us in a world which is the packed treasure-house of God's invitations and splendours."

Theologians have almost exclusively focused their attention upon Buber's seminal work I and Thou (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1987) originally published in 1923. This is a mistake for two reasons. First, although this is his most important work, Buber wrote extensively on numerous themes. I and Thou may be seen to lay great emphasis upon individual relationships understood for their own sake, an accusation made by Zizioulas, almost as if, in Zizioulas language, the relationship were a further, or intermediate hypostasis or substance. But this is to miss the emphasis of much of Buber's later thinking, which focuses on dialogue in community and lived relationship within community.

Buber, as will be demonstrated, conceded the weakness of I and Thou, and attempted to present more refined models and insights into human encounter. The weakness of I and Thou, a weakness fully acknowledged by Buber in later life, is part of a much wider misconception, to which Moltmann alludes (The Church in the Power of the Spirit, London, SCM, 1977 p.120):

"Friendship has become individualised and emotionalised. Inner agreement, natural affection, mutual goodwill and free choice have now become the determining factors in friendship Because the individual becomes lonely when the private sphere is separated from the public one, he needs friends. But they do not break through the loneliness in any essential way. The friendship of heart and soul becomes 'the loneliness of two people'."

In his later writings Buber recognises this, and indeed his concept of alienation encompasses the separation of public and private as a major source of the problem. In developing his ideas concerning dialogue as opposed to relation, he emphasises action and movement in human interaction: moving towards others through dialogue or away from them and back to ourselves through monologue, not so much as a static existential structure but something "caused" or not caused by a human agent, as may be.

Secondly Buber's writings must be seen in the context of his life experiences. To understand the thinking of I and Thou it is necessary to put this work in the context of his whole life and work. And moreover, in his multi-faceted life and thinking, Buber subsumes and reinterprets many of the major philosophical themes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and also much Jewish thinking in the same period.

As indicated above the personal encounter of the individual with God and others has taken on a new importance, and the theology of the Holy Spirit has also become increasingly central in the last one hundred and fifty years. Both these aspects emphasise the existential aspect of the Church, the experience of living in the Church in a communion of love. As Kierkegaard first noted, faith is an event; living in the Church is primarily an event; communion is an event. Zizioulas stands for a wholly relational understanding of God, Christ and the Church which brings out the existential experience of the Holy Spirit's working in the Church. He sees the very ontology of the Godhead as relational, and the person of Jesus Christ similarly.

It will be the contention of this essay that as the "work" of Jesus Christ was the redemption of the world, so the work of the Holy Spirit is bringing about this redemption through the koinonia of Christians. Koinonia is a qualitative term: namely a

situation which brings about an enhanced quality of relation between the Christian and God, and between Christian and Christian. In emphasising this existential aspect one is emphasising the field of operation of the Holy Spirit. As we experience Christ as redeemer we experience the Spirit as the one who works in and through relations in the Body of Christ.

Martin Buber will be seen as assisting our understanding of the above, *mutatis mutandis*, because he begins with relation, first with God, but then this relationship spilling over into our relations with others. In the Church we understand the Holy Spirit as bringing about these qualitative relationships through the attitude and response of Christians to each other. It is this existential event that Buber designates as the "Thou" - which we can describe in the Church as the efficacy of the transactions of God's people for their mutual work of salvation from death to life. These transactions or encounters are the lived relationships within the Church and beyond.

Insofar as Zizioulas and Buber may be compared both positively and negatively in the existential and relational way they approach their thinking, this provides useful dialogic links with modern philosophy and theology. And it may also be that Buber can give us useful insights from his own communitarian form of existentialism, insights that help us approach Church renewal in terms of practical fellowship and a more critical existential approach to Church institutions and ministry in particular.

The method of this essay will be first to set out the main lines of Zizioulas' relational theology, especially where these have particular reference to existential concerns. This will be followed by an outline of Buber's existential philosophy of the interhuman, although it must be acknowledged that this is more difficult since he is not a systematic thinker at all. Having reviewed the main lines of their thinking, a comparison will then

be attempted to bring out first, the common philosophical ground between them, as well as points of divergence and secondly to bring out the more developed and practical ideas concerning koinonia and community. Additionally both these comparisons will be made relating them to other theological, philosophical and sociological thinking in the modern period.

CHAPTER I

PERSON AND PERSONAL ENCOUNTER IN ZIZIOULAS AND OTHERS

Personhood and Being

In his introduction to Being as Communion (Zizioulas J. pp. 15-24) Zizioulas emphasises, in a passage that I have already quoted, (op.cit. p. 15) that the Church is a way of being and an existential necessity. He points out that in the patristic period it was rather the being of God which preoccupied the Fathers - how God existed. Against the background of Greek monism and the teaching of the Gnostics, the bishops, such as Ignatius, Irenaeus and Athanasius stressed the understanding of the being of God as being only comprehensible through personal relationships and love: "Being means life, and life means communion " (op.cit. p. 16).

Jürgen Moltmann has some useful comments upon this Eastern social doctrine, which is how he designates it. He says that two analogies of the Trinity have in general obtained in the Church (See "The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit - Trinitarian Pneumatology" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S., Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 37, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1984 p. 287-300): Augustine's psychological doctrine, where the model is the soul dominating the body and the social doctrine of the East, where the model is relationships between persons, whether in society, within the family, husband, wife and children, or within friendship:

"Gregory of Nazianzus discovered the analogy and the image of the triune God on earth in the primal 'nuclear' family of Adam and Eve and Seth " (op.cit. p 290) (Greg. Naz., Or. 31, 11).

The elemental cell of human community corresponds to the triune God, they "share one flesh and blood, and form a single family" (ibid.).

Zizioulas concurs with this by asserting that God is a relational being, about whom it would not be possible to speak without the concept of communion. (See Zizioulas J. p. 16) Augustine rejected this, reducing the likeness of God to the human soul.

In saying that God is communion, we are talking of the Trinity, for "the substance of God has no ontological content apart from communion." (ibid.). And in general, therefore, communion is treated as an ontological concept, it is communion which makes beings what they are. Also communion can only exist between concrete and free persons, "hypostases", who can love freely and be loved.

Zizioulas develops his ideas about personhood and begins by relating it to contemporary humanism. He sees the respect for personal identity stressed as an ideal, but in such a way as to detach it from Christianity and theology and reinterpret it in terms of an autonomous morality or a purely humanistic existential philosophy. He further considers that, although 'personal identity' is much discussed it is not recognised that historically and existentially "the concept of the person is indissolubly bound up with theology." (op cit. p. 27) And furthermore, he says that individualistic and psychological conceptions of the person have become so dominant as to have led to a rejection of an understanding of God as a person. This is the case, for example, with Fichte, Feuerbach and Tillich. Zizioulas believes that we should seek a different understanding of God from that which is related to individuality and consciousness. (See Zizioulas J. " Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p. 420).

Zizioulas describes the concept of person in the ancient world. Essentially the concept is impossible in the monistic perspective, since freedom, as an essential aspect of person, is absent, indeed impossible. Because there is no real freedom, "personhood" is nothing but a mask. For the Romans persona is a role in state, associations and family. The Roman conception is highly politicised and Zizioulas maintains that this has considerably influenced Western thought (Zizioulas J. p.35).

These conceptions change with the coming of Christianity. The biblical outlook freed the world and man from ontological necessity, because of the biblical doctrine of creation ex nihilo, the closed ontology of the Greeks was broken since the world originated with a source outside itself, and also, and more importantly, made the world a product of freedom. Zizioulas notes ("Human Capacity & Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.402):

"Greek thought in all its variations (Platonic, Aristotelian etc.) always operated with what we may call a '**closed ontology**'. As E. L. Mascall puts it, 'for both (Platonic and Aristotelian thought) every being had a nicely rounded-off nature which contained implicitly everything that the being could ever become. ...

What Greek thought could not have tolerated ... would have been the idea that a being could become more perfect in its kind by acquiring some characteristic which was not implicit in its nature before " (The Openness of Being, 1971 p.246 f).

Also the essentially Greek but innovative thinking of the Fathers led to the conclusion that from being an adjunct of being, the person becomes the being itself and the

constitutive or principle of beings. Personhood and freedom thus become key theological concepts.

Zizioulas expands elsewhere on this conclusion concerning Person and freedom, (See "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T.F. & Reid J.K.S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p. 409-410). If the notion of hypostasis, pointing to that which makes a being itself, is viewed in terms of 'person' rather than 'substance' then it is clear that there has been a resolution with regard to Greek and especially Aristotelian ontology: namely, that the apparent conflict between Hebrew "ontology" (creation ex nihilo) accompanied by the personal nature of Hebrew thinking in general and the Greek monistic and fatalistic ontology accompanied by its impersonal way of thinking is resolved. For the ontological question concerning hypostasis is not answered by pointing to a self-existent being but to a being which transcends its boundaries ecstatically, that is, in a movement of communion. We are not looking at a being as self-contained and static but at a being which is towards others in an open-ended and dynamic relationship. Rather than threatening it, communion becomes constitutive of personal identity. Ontological identity is not found in every 'substance' as such, but in beings which are "free from the boundaries of self" (ibid.). Such a being is ontologically free because boundaries "render it subject to individualisation, comprehension, combination, definition, description and use" (ibid.). This identity is ultimately applicable only to personal beings, and is a unique one of a being in itself, through communion which makes it part of a relational web, an event which is indispensable and unique. Zizioulas believes that this perspective should not surprise the christian who believes the world to exist because of an act of God's free love, an act of Him who is love itself:

"For if the notion of God carries with it the ultimate ontological claim 'I am that I am', it is because only God can claim to be a personal being in the genuine sense I have just indicated: he is the only being that is in an ultimate sense 'itself', i.e., **particular**, but whose particularity is established in full ontological freedom, i.e., not by virtue of its boundaries (he is 'incomprehensible', 'indivisible' etc.), but by its ekstasis of communion (he is eternally Trinity and love) which makes it unique and indispensable " (ibid.).

This then led, mainly through the theology of the Cappadocian Fathers, and especially St. Basil, to the identification of the being of God himself with the person, whereas in Western theology the 'ontology' of God has been seen as consisting in the substance of God, the unity of God is the one divine substance. Moltmann asserts ("The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit - Trinitarian Pneumatology" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S., Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 37, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1984 p. 288) that in the West, Tertullian's thought proceeded from the notion of the unity of the one, homogeneous, divine being and essence: una substantia - tres personae:

"The precedence he gave to the one divine essence over the tri-unity of the divine Persons was long accepted as a matter of course in the tradition of the Western Church. When at the beginning of the modern period in Europe, the metaphysic of subjectivity replaced the metaphysic of substance, God ceased to be thought of solely as supreme substance. He was now conceived of as the absolute subject (e.g. by Fichte and Hegel). The unity of the triune God then no longer lay solely in the homogeneity of the divine substance; it was also to be

found in the identity of the one divine subject. This led to the modern formulation of trinitarian doctrine: one divine subject - three different modes of being (cf. Hegel, Dorner, Barth and Rahner). In this formula too the unity of God takes precedence over the Trinity of the divine Persons."

In the Greek Fathers the unity of God consists in the hypostasis, namely, the person of the Father, who is the 'cause' of the generation of the Son and of the procession of the Spirit.² (In this context it is possible to see why the West had no problem with the Filioque.³) And in this way we do not bind the personal freedom of God because the being of God is not an ontological necessity but an act of personal freedom. God, as Father and not as substance, forever confirms this free will to exist. Zizioulas continues:

"If God exists, He exists because the Father exists, that is, He who out of love freely begets the Son and brings forth the Spirit. Thus God as person - as the hypostasis of the Father - makes the one divine substance to be that which it is: the one God " (Zizioulas p.41).

Speaking as someone who has been exclusively trained in the Western mode of Trinitarian theology, it seems to me that Zizioulas is asserting a forgotten element of classical theology at a time when, as he implies earlier in this chapter, humankind are in search of 'personal identity' divorced from the personal God. In a footnote he draws attention to Karl Rahner's critique of the Western approach to the doctrine of God, which confirms his own view:

² See St Basil, Letter 38, 2, PG 32:325, and St Maximus the Confessor, Ambigua 42, PG 91:134 D ff, also Gregory of Nyssa, Against Eunomius 1, PG 45:337

³ Zizioulas comments (Zizioulas p.41 n.35) that Augustine and Thomas Aquinas had no difficulty with the Filioque precisely because it identified the being, the ontological principle, of God with His substance rather than with the person of the Father.

"Through the encounter in faith with Jesus Christ, the 'Son' as such, and with the Holy Spirit, as the innermost principle of our sonship and of our absolute proximity to God, this unoriginate God is experienced as the Father of the Son, as 'generating principle', as source, origin and principle of the whole Godhead " (The Trinity, London, Burns & Oates/Herder & Herder, 1970 pp.58 ff.).

Zizioulas then develops his argument by asserting that this hypostatic 'existence' of God has profound existential significance in three areas. First, the freedom of the person, as free hypostasis, is fundamentally undermined by the necessity of existence.⁴ Secondly, if absolute freedom is only possible through suicide, then freedom leads to nihilism. Our freedom must always be limited by others, and thus others become, as Sartre has demonstrated a threat, a "hell", a "fall". "Humanism proves unable to affirm personhood." (Zizioulas J, p. 43). Personhood can only be affirmed by a personal God, whose freedom lies not in his nature but in His personal existence.

He transcends and abolishes the ontological necessity of the substance by being God as Father, as He who begets the Son and brings forth the Spirit. Necessity is replaced with free self-affirmation which is ecstatic, which is communion, originating not in God as a substance but originating in God the Father. And Zizioulas comments:

"For this communion is a product of freedom as a result not of the substance of God but of a person, the Father - observe why this doctrinal detail is so important - who is Trinity, not because the divine nature is ecstatic but because the Father as a person freely wills this communion " (op.cit. p. 4).

⁴ For an extended exposition of these matters in Dostoevsky see Zizioulas J. "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S., Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 pp.429-433.

If this is so, it is evident that the only exercise of freedom in an ontological manner is love. "God is love" (1 John 4. 16), not as a property of the divine, but as constitutive of His substance (See Zizioulas p.46).

Thirdly, the person wants to possess an ontological content - to exist as a concrete, unique and unrepeatable entity. This desire is frustrated by egocentrism on the one hand and by relativism in social life on the other, and this all culminates in death. The survival of the hypostasis of a person cannot be ensured by any property of substance or nature. Elsewhere Zizioulas asserts that this desire for ontological content has influenced the thinking concerning death, which has always been associated with matter and body (See "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.422). The substantialistic approach necessitates the postulation of an immortal soul to ensure immortality. Zizioulas believes that this line of argument has created numerous difficulties and is unbiblical. Furthermore such a view cannot explain the human fear of death:

"Only if we associate being with its 'mode of being', i.e. Person as the bearer of being, can we make any ontological sense out of this unacceptability of death. It is at this point that the association of death with the body becomes evident " (ibid.).

He also makes the comment that humanistic existential philosophy answers this question of the survival of the person through an ontologizing of death, through an indissoluble union of being with non-being, of existence with death, and that some theologians have inconsistently adopted this approach. But the survival of the hypostasis of a person can only be assured by the expression of free communion. This

follows from the trinitarian existence of God which is eternal because it is personal, it is love. Death in Zizioulas' view is the cessation of a person's uniqueness and unrepeatability in communion, while life is the survival of uniqueness through love which affirms it. (See Zizioulas J. p.49).

Zizioulas goes on to assert that the above is the essence of salvation or divinization, which consists in participation not in the nature or substance of God, but in His personal existence. And it is our participation, or the Church's participation in this personal existence of God, which forms salvation history, which in turn relates the experience of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This life is realised on the level of human existence, not, however, at the level of biological existence, but of what he calls "ecclesial existence." (Zizioulas J. p. 50). "The hypostasis of biological existence is "constituted" by man's conception and birth" (ibid.). The act of erotic love, which brings forth a person, is an astounding mystery and a deep act of communion, a tendency towards an ecstatic transcendence of individuality through creation. Indeed, this transcendence is, according to Zizioulas, an important aspect of all human endeavour:

"Thus, even if one looks at the actual man of our experience, one is confronted with the fact that most of man's actions, consciously or unconsciously, go beyond his actual state in a movement of transcendence of the actual human limitations " ("Human Capacity & Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.401).

Erotic love is beset by two weaknesses: the effect of necessity as a result of natural instinct and of individualism, the separation of the hypostases, and the fact of death. It is very significant that Zizioulas introduces sexual love at this point, or at least sexual differentiation, since, according to Moltmann, this must be part of the Eastern social analogy of the Trinity. He comments: ("The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit - Trinitarian Pneumatology" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 37, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1984 p.292):

"But if human beings in their bodily existence are God's image on earth, then they are this too in their sexual differentiation as male and female. It is not the sexless soul and not the solitary individual that is counted worthy to correspond to God and to participate in his eternal being; it is the human community of persons."

The weaknesses of erotic love however mean that the body becomes the fortress of individualism which hinders the hypostasis from becoming a person. And death is part of the very constitutional make-up of the hypostasis, of the biological act of the perpetuation of the species. Zizioulas expresses this graphically:

"By the same erotic act with which he tries to attain ecstasy he is led to individualism His body is the tragic instrument which leads to communion with others But at the same time it is the 'mask' of hypocrisy and the vehicle of the final separation, death. 'Wretched man that I am Who will deliver me from this body of death?' (Rom. 7. 24)" (Zizioulas J. p.52).

He asserts that the constitutional make-up of the hypostasis must be changed not in a moral or improving sense but by way of a new birth, a new mode of existence of the

hypostasis which makes the person to be love, freedom and life, which mode he calls the "hypostasis of ecclesial existence" (op.cit. p. 53).

Emil Brunner expresses this truth similarly. He states that what is lacking in the ordinary personal encounter is the overcoming of the I-It relation by the I-Thou relation; what is missing is love. Only when a man or a woman has first entered into fellowship with God can he or she have true fellowship with men and women:

"Through faith and through it alone our fellowman becomes, like God, an actual 'Thou'." (Brunner E. Truth as Encounter, London, SCM, 1964 p.129)

The basis of this hypostasis, therefore, must be constituted in an ontological reality which does not suffer from createdness, from ontological necessity and death.⁵ This basis is Jesus Christ who realises in history the hypostasis of the person for everyone. For this to be a reality the identification of the person of Christ with the hypostasis of the Son of the Holy Trinity is an indispensable truth. This identification, or adoption of man by God, takes place in baptism. Through Christ's hypostasis every human being acquires their hypostasis or personhood, through the same relationship which constitutes Christ's hypostasis, namely Sonship with the Father. As the Son is uniquely loveable, as repeatable and worthy of eternal survival, so is the human person by adoption. Such a state of personhood, grounded in the ontological basis of the Godhead, constitutes an ontological basis for the being of human persons. This is what is implied in the new birth of baptism, new being not subject to death and,

⁵ Zizioulas summarises his argument elsewhere ("Human Capacity & Human Incapacity" in Torrance T F, & Reid J K S, Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 pp.407-408) and comments:
 "The understanding of the person as a relational category in our time has marked a sharp contrast with the Boethian individualistic tradition. Some representative examples of this trend are to be found in Buber M, I and Thou, Macmurray J, Persons in Relation and The Self as Agent." (ibid.)

therefore, "ontologically ultimate". This new filial relationship is attested in the biblical narratives of Christ's baptism and the baptismal rites of the early Church. (See "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p. 437/438)

This rebirth in the Church makes persons members of a new family in which there is no exclusivism, separation and death. But obviously, along with the ecclesial hypostasis, human beings do not cease to be born and die in accordance with the biological hypostasis. This distinction must be maintained, but in a paradoxical sense by being defined eschatologically:

"Man appears to exist in his ecclesial identity, not as that which he is but as that which he will be; the ecclesial identity is linked with eschatology, that is, with the final outcome of his existence " (op.cit. p. 59).

Zizioulas suggests that this new way of thinking about this paradoxical hypostasis could be expressed by calling it a sacramental or eucharistic hypostasis. The eucharist is principally an assembly, a synaxis, a community in which division is overcome, it is the historical realisation of the philosophical principle that the hypostasis expresses the whole of its nature and not just a part. In addition the eucharist is a movement, a progress towards an eschatological fulfilment. So in respect of the relationship between the biological and ecclesial hypostasis we can say that the ontological reality of the person belongs to the future.

But there is, of course, an "already but not yet" about the eucharist, an ascetic element, for the body, in its erotic mode, cannot be abandoned but must be transformed by the

new reality which Zizioulas calls the 'ecclesial hypostasis' (See op.cit. p.63). Thus eros is transformed into a movement of free love with a universal character, and the body is liberated from individualism and egocentricity and becomes a supreme expression of community - the Body of Christ. Also the ecclesial existence of a person constitutes a pledge of the final victory of mankind over death. Zizioulas maintains that, for the Greek Fathers, the body constituted an important element of the "imago Dei" and it is only in this context that the belief in the resurrection of the body makes sense.⁶ (See "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p. 423)

Truth and Communion

Zizioulas investigates how his ideas of communion and personhood and being affect our understanding of Christ as the truth. It was with the essentially pastoral approach of Ignatius and Irenaeus that the debate moved on with the identification of knowledge and communion. The seed was already sown in the identification of truth as "eternal life" or "true life" in the Fourth Gospel (John 3. 15,16; 14. 6; 17.3), truth as praxis in the Old Testament sense. This insight seems to have arisen as the result of the experience of the eucharistic community, for the eucharist, which is Christ, imparts both truth and life, within the context of the member of the eucharistic community partaking of the life of communion with God. Then the Arian crisis highlighted the

⁶ And he adds in an important footnote (ibid)
 "This may help us see the connection between the various uses of the word 'body', for example in Paul: the Body of the risen Christ which is the 'mode of existence' of true humanity is a 'presence', both in the sense of the 'Parousia' and in that of the Eucharist, *only in and through communion*, i.e. as community (Church). The four connotations of 'body' in Paul (Christological, anthropological, ecclesiological and eucharistic) meet and thus make sense because of the ultimate identity between 'presence' or life and communion."

need for a radical revision of the Logos doctrine. This was undertaken by Athanasius, but only by the assertion that the Logos is identical with the Son as part of the Trinity, and as a consequence of the ontology of communion already expounded by Ignatius and Irenaeus. Aided by the idea of communion as possessing an ontological significance through the eucharistic approach to being, Athanasius developed the idea that communion belongs not to the level of will and action but to that of substance. Athanasius sees that without the relationship between Father and Son, the fullness of the Father's nature is depleted or even eliminated. So he can make the extraordinary statement:

"If the Son was not there before He was born there would be no truth in God " (Contra Arianos 1. 20).

It is the Father-Son relationship that makes God the "truth" eternally in Himself since Father is essentially a relational term. It is this relational context that makes Athanasius' thinking such a radical departure from Greek thought. (See op.cit. pp.85 & 86)

Zizioulas demonstrates that these ideas were further developed in relation to the otherness of the persons within the Godhead. Working from the Trinitarian being of God it may be asserted that, as it is only in relationship that identity has ontological significance, so too human persons have identity through being in relation. (See op.cit. p. 88). Zizioulas believes that this assertion of the Greek Fathers was an important milestone in Christian understanding by establishing the identification of both with communion because communion was then conceived not as something additional to being but, constitutive of it. (See op.cit. p.101). This is particularly true in respect of human nature. Human nature is only definable in terms of communion. We are a

long way from its definition in a purely humanistic sense, that is, only through an introspective analysis of human nature per se:

"The humanity which is revealed in and through Christ is not a humanity which is ultimately defined in terms of its nature as such; it is true and real humanity only because it is constituted in and through personhood; it is 'hypostatic' in being 'ekstatic', i.e. free from its 'natural' boundaries and united in communion with God." ("Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.445)

If this is the case, there exists a problem, because, in our fallen state, our approach to truth is constituted by being before communion. Zizioulas asserts that the fall consists of idolatry, turning created existence into the ultimate point of reference. Ontologically speaking this idolatry consists in the refusal to make being dependent on communion, and in the assertion of a being defined merely in relation to itself. This constitutes a rupture between truth and communion.

In a fallen world, then the being of things has to be recognised before a relationship can happen. This is linked to the idea of individuality, which must be ultimately explained by reference to the rupture between being and communion, which produces a situation of fragmented existence in which beings are particular before they can relate to each other. This generates a problem of authority, since we have to submit to the truth of being of whatever is other than ourselves. Kierkegaard drew attention to this problem, pointing out this conflict between truth and freedom, and the priority of being over communion in our fallen world, and should not be taken as axiomatic in our

approach to either metaphysical anthropology or trinitarian theology, as is the case with the theology of Thomas Aquinas. The practical consequences of our condition are that "doing the truth" is impossible for people because faith and praxis only coincide for a moment. Zizioulas says:

"Kierkegaard's discovery of the authentic moment of existence struck the greatest blow against the West's subject-object structuring of truth, but led only to an identification of truth with doubt." (op.cit. p.104).

One of the most serious consequences of this individualisation of being can be seen in the fact of death. Being subject to annihilation is a plain contradiction of truth on the ontological level. As with Zizioulas' discussion concerning the new life of the ecclesial hypostasis, we see in the Church, in life within the communion of Christians the intrinsic connection between death and individualisation. He points out (op cit. p 105) that the Fourth Gospel identifies eternal life (life without death) with truth and knowledge. When truth is applied to existence, life becomes true, undying life. But this can only happen if individualisation is transformed by communion, if the individuality of beings is transformed and becomes communion. "Truth must be communion if it is to be life " (ibid.). The essential thing, therefore, about a person lies in his or her being a revelation of truth, not as 'substance' or 'nature' but as a 'mode of existence'.

The principal result of the Fall was division, whereby it is not possible to see the connections between things. In the Fall personhood is perverted in such a way that the difference between God and creatures is turned into division. In this way God's purpose in creating humankind, namely communion, is frustrated.

The mystery of being a person lies in the fact that otherness and communion are not in contradiction but coincide. Zizioulas sees this as contrasted to the situation of 'nature in itself' which is subject to fragmentation, individualisation and conceptualisation. The true person is not subject to these and indeed, in this context, otherness does not inevitably result in division. In the context of existentialism Zizioulas observes that some existentialist philosophers accurately describe the human situation characterised by dividedness and individualisation. He sees the inherent transcendence within human beings being frustrated by our fallen state which tends towards what Heidegger describes as 'being-unto-death':

"This identification of otherness with unity is incompatible with fallen existence, into which we are born as individuals with a clear tendency to seize, dominate and possess being. This individualised and individualising Adam in us is our original sin, and, because of it the 'other', i.e.. beings existing outside ourselves, in the end becomes our enemy and 'our original sin' (Sartre J-P. L'Être et le Néant, 1949, p. 251). A human being left to himself cannot be a person. And the ekstasis of beings towards humanity or towards creation alone leads to 'being-unto-death'. For this reason, all attempts to define truth as 'being-unto-life' require automatically the idea of being beyond created existence." (op.cit. p.107)

In his article "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" (in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.417) Zizioulas elaborates on Heidegger's idea of 'being-unto-death'. He believes that this accurately describes the ontology of a fallen world. For the latter

cannot stand on its own feet but depends on the possibility of 'being-unto-life', that is, "a presence without absence" (ibid.).

Elsewhere in the same article (op.cit. p.443) Zizioulas explains what he means by this 'being-unto-life'. Because of the resurrection of Christ, who in his own person recapitulates humankind, there is no longer any ultimacy for death or non-existence. Freedom, whose only result is non-existence, is no real freedom at all. He is also emphatic that without the Resurrection, the Cross of Christ can have no relevance for ontology, indeed it would tend to "ontologize" death and non-existence as an ultimate possibility for human persons. This discussion of otherness and communion highlights the essential difference between Zizioulas' theological perspective and the humanistic. The latter attempts to answer the conundrum of human existence through introspection, looking within human beings themselves; Zizioulas' approach asserts that the human situation can only be adequately discussed if human beings are seen as a mystery which can only be investigated in relation to "extra-human realities" (ibid.). Indeed in a footnote elsewhere he states that this observation of Martin Heidegger concerning humankind's 'being' and 'being-unto-death' in particular "is of great importance for an ontology of the world taken as it is, i.e.. without reference to a beyond " (Zizioulas J. p.107).

Zizioulas relates this incapacity in human nature in itself to the truth of Christ, since he believes that the only way for a true person to exist is for being and communion to coincide. The Trinity is the revelation of true personhood and so offers the possibility for an identification of being and communion. This is linked to important Christological implications because it means that Christ has to be God in order to be Saviour, since otherwise human beings would still be trapped within the confines of

their own being. But Zizioulas goes further because he asserts that in this perspective, he must be a true person as well and not an individual (See op.cit. p.108). This is so because true life, without death, is an impossibility for us. Christ is truth because he manifests the survival of being through the Resurrection. But Zizioulas sees a problem in this, in that, if Christ's being is established as an entity conceivable in itself, the question arises as to how man and creation can be connected with this individual existentially. He answers his own question by asserting that the problem is linked with the relationship between Christology and pneumatology.

With our substantialistic Western ontology and individualistic theology Christ is understood as an individual presenting Himself to us objectively and historically. The distance between Him and us is bridged by certain means, for example Scripture and perhaps tradition, this bridging being assisted by the Holy Spirit. Moltmann observes:

"In the universal monarchy of the One God, the Spirit is nothing other than the efficacy of his rule, the subjective side of his objective revelation, and the inner fruit of his external word and sacrament." (The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit - Trinitarian Pneumatology" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 37, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1984 p.288).

But an alternative approach is one in which Christ cannot be conceived in Himself as an individual. When we say that He is the truth we are meaning in his whole personal existence, His relationship with His body, the Church. We mean by Christ person and not individual, a relational reality:

"Here the Holy Spirit is not one who aids us in bridging the distance between Christ and ourselves, but he is the person of the Trinity who

actually realises in history that which we call Christ, this absolute relational entity, our Saviour." (Zizioulas J. p.111).

In Zizioulas' view Christology must be essentially conditioned by Pneumatology, indeed, constituted by it. There can be no gap to fill between the Christ-truth and ourselves. The Holy Spirit, in making the Christ-event real in history, also makes real Christ's personal existence as a body or community. Christ is both truth and communion at the same time. In this pneumatological perspective there is no separation between Christology and Ecclesiology. Zizioulas further reflects in "Human Capacity and Incapacity" (Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.438) that it is the Holy Spirit who achieves this "de-individualisation" of Christ's humanity. The Spirit figures in the incarnation, life, death, and Resurrection of Christ and any other view is profoundly unbiblical. The same is true for each person's relation to Christ. This is rooted in the Spirit because the Holy Spirit does not merely assist the relationship but it is only in the Spirit that it happens at all. "Baptism was from the beginning 'in the Spirit' and 'into Christ'." (ibid.)

Through the Holy Spirit's operation Christ's existence is applied to our historical existence not "in abstracto or individually", (Zizioulas J. p.113) but in and through a community.⁷ This application is achieved in baptism, and "the resurrectional aspect of

⁷ It is possible to see here more than one level of meaning in Zizioulas' argument. Indeed his use of "in abstracto" could be seen as problematical. He seems to be using it as contrasted with "in community", whereas "individually" would seem to suffice in this context. It may be that he is also thinking of Luther's soteriological doctrine of imputation, which can sound rather abstract and legalistic (in the sense of legal language applied generally). How does a righteousness which is extrinseca or aliena apply to the individual person? Imputation can be interpreted as a generalised or "blanket" sentence of God. Zizioulas is emphatic that this cannot be so, since the salvific effect of the crucified and risen Lord can be applied to the individual person only in the community, the pneumatic body. For Zizioulas it is impossible to speak of Christ other than in terms of communion, a pneumatological phenomenon i.e. identifying Him with the "communion of saints". No doubt he would see imputation as a manifestation of western individualism.

baptism is therefore nothing other than incorporation into the community" (ibid.), a new birth in the Spirit, so that our life, our existence, like Christ's becomes one of communion and hence of true life. This communitarian perspective modifies Christology through Ecclesiology. Through his salvific action Christ becomes the initiator of personhood for humankind and thereby acquires a body and in fact is only spoken of in terms of this body (See Acts 9.5; Cor. 12.12 etc.). In relating to Christ, moreover, in and through personhood, the Church affirms his existence in communion, in the koinonia of the Spirit. The affirmation of personhood in Christ leads to the community of the Church. The Church, in turn, makes possible the referring of the whole creation to God in its integrity through human personhood:

"This makes the Church *eucharistic* in its very nature, and man God by participation in God." ("Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.442).

And in making the Church eucharistic in its very nature, it makes the People of God especially priestly in their vocation within the Church.

Zizioulas goes on to demonstrate that this experience of truth in the Church's existence is fully realised in the eucharist. In the eucharist we have a way of understanding Christ as truth, not as revealed as truth in a community, but as a community, the community itself becoming the truth:

"Truth thus springs up from our midst. But it comes clearly from another world, and as such is not produced by ourselves." (Zizioulas J. p.115).

While "not produced by ourselves" but by God, this saving activity is firmly rooted in our world. Indeed Zizioulas quotes Athanasius ("Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p. 438) in saying that God meets humankind "ek tōn kato" "from underneath", that is, within, not without, our world, our space-time structure, our fallen and divided world. By so doing God opens up the possibility of these structures becoming bearers of infinite capacity, of ekstasis. They are given "a sort of transworldly aspect in which they are open to the transcendent ground of the order they bear within nature." (Torrance T. F. Space, Time and Incarnation, 1969 p. 18).

Human capacity, therefore, does not require a departure from creaturely conditions in order to exist. Communion with God is possible for humanity - and through it for the entire creation - only in and through creaturely existence. History is no longer as it was for the Greek world, the obstacle to communion with God, but its ground.

The kind of truth that is meant here does not come to us simply as the result of historical transmission. In the light of the eucharist, history has to be seen as conditioned by the anamnestic and epicletic character of the eucharist, for history moves not just in a linear fashion but: "acquires the dimensions of the future, which is also a vertical dimension transforming history into charismatic-pentecostal events." (Zizioulas J. p. 115). In this context truth within the koinonia is associated with the bishop because the bishop is at the centre of the eucharistic community in a pentecostal context. (For a fuller discussion of this matter see p. 50.) Also in this eucharistic perspective we can understand the dogmatic definitions of the councils because the eucharist requires a common vision of Christ. The aim was eucharistic communion.

Zizioulas points out (op.cit. p.118) that dogmas, like ministries, exist as truth within the communion-event created by the Spirit, and cannot survive outside it. Formulas do not have the power to convey truth unless the Spirit gives life to them within this communion-event. Furthermore in the eucharist truth is demonstrated as not just something concerning humanity alone, but as having profound cosmic dimensions: "The Christ of the eucharist is revealed as the life and recapitulation of all creation " (op.cit. p.119). In the eucharist humankind reconnect created nature to infinite existence in a priestly function. This liberates creation from necessity by allowing it to develop its potentialities to the full. Thus God gives to humankind the responsibility of making a "eucharistic reality out of nature" (ibid.), that is, to make nature capable of communion. Within this context, Zizioulas sees the possibility of the split between the Church and science being overcome. Because Zizioulas sees nature being enslaved by modern technological man he sees that it could be liberated by man if man was freed from this desire to dominate nature. This can only happen if the eucharistic conception of truth informs the life of humanity in such a way that communion with God extends to all creation.

Finally Zizioulas relates truth to freedom within the communion-event, freedom not as choices between negation and affirmation, good and evil, but "freedom from division and individualisation, creating the possibility of otherness within communion " (op.cit. p.121).

Christ, the Spirit and the Church

Zizioulas next considers in Being as Communion how Christology and Ecclesiology must be conditioned by Pneumatology if they are to relate to anthropology. Indeed he

has earlier raised the question. (In "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p. 440). He feels that theology has often not served anthropology well in the sense that the former has not explained how the Christ-event relates to every human being in their own existential situation. But he is also confident that this can be done through the thorough-going and radical application of the notion of personhood to theology. He also comments that historically theology has been very reluctant to allow Christology to be conditioned by Pneumatology and ecclesiology. He regards this reluctance as contributory to the divisions between Rome and Orthodoxy, and the furtherance of dialogue as being dependent upon the interconnectedness of those disciplines being acknowledged after many centuries.⁸

One might add that this subject is central to the furtherance of any dialogue between any of the churches. The point is made in The Report of the British Council of Churches Study Commission on Trinitarian Doctrine Today The Forgotten Trinity, (London, BCC, 1989 p.29):

"The heart of the matter is, once again, the relation between Christology and Pneumatology in our thought about the Church. A strong orientation to Christology stresses the past historical and so institutional aspects of ecclesiology. Here the importance of the Trinity is twofold. First, by stressing the fact that God's being consists in community, it asserts the theological priority of community over

⁸ He adds (ibid):
"Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his Christology had gone remarkably far in this respect, given the fact that he does not seem to operate openly with Pneumatology as a decisive condition for Christology. His idea of Christ pro me, combined with a stress on community as the focus of Christ's presence, opens up great possibilities for an appreciation of the anthropological significance of Christology."

institution or anything impersonal. ... Second, by stressing the action of the Spirit as of equal importance to that of the Son, it makes it possible to emphasise God's present as well as his past action is constituting the Church and along with this the eschatological, future orientated, dimensions of ecclesiology' ".

Zizioulas goes on to point out that, for example, since the time of St Paul, the Spirit has been associated with the notion of *koinonia*. Indeed in relation to the Christ-event, it is precisely because of the work of the Holy Spirit that Christ is not just an individual, not "one" but "many". Pneumatology contributes to Christology this dimension of communion. Thus it is possible to speak of Christ as having a "body", the Church. Wesley Carr confirms this eschatological perspective of Zizioulas ("Towards a Contemporary Theology of the Holy Spirit" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh. Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.501):

"In the discussions of the Spirit what was most quickly lost was the insistence of the New Testament writers, and particularly of Paul, that the Holy Spirit which is experienced in the Church is an eschatological phenomenon ".

Moltmann has some interesting observations concerning the Church and the Holy Spirit. He says;

"In the West, theological ecclesiologies have traditionally put their main emphasis on the justification of the authority of the Church's ministry. The justification for the community of God's people played a very secondary part. This view led to the depreciation of the charismata of

the Holy Spirit which are poured out on the whole Church. It led to the reduction of the charismatic Church to the charisma of a single office "

(See Moltmann J, The Church in the Power of the Spirit, London, SCM Press, 1975).

But according to the New Testament experience, the community of Christ is itself already the charismatic community (1 Cor 12; Rom. 12.3 ff.; Eph. 4.7)." The entire Church has a charismatic structure." ("The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit - Trinitarian Pneumatology" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 37, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1984 p.293).

Having set out his thesis in Being as Communion Zizioulas goes on to draw some implications from his synthesis. He asserts for example that in view of the above, namely, that the Pentecostal event is an ecclesiological constitutive event, the correct relationship between the local and the universal Church now becomes apparent. He believes that, ecclesiological speaking, local churches are as important or fundamental as the Universal Church. This is because any presence of the one Christ event is as important ontologically as the Christ event itself. In this line of thinking no priority of the universal Church over the local is conceivable (See Zizioulas J. p 133).

In the same way that there is one God, there is one Church and the expression of this one Church is the communion of the many local Churches. In more practical terms this means that there is no ministry or institution of unity which is not expressed in the form of communion; of the one and the many, the many and the one. Again Moltmann has some pertinent comments:

"The Church finds its unity in the fellowship of the Son with the Father, into which the Holy Spirit draws the community of Christians too, as



John 17.20ff tells us. The community of Christ is the 'lived' Trinity, in so far as it practises the mutual love which corresponds to the eternal love of the Trinity itself " ("The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit - Trinitarian Pneumatology", in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 37, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1984 p.294).

For example the Orthodox Church is not simply a confederation of local churches - it requires an institution which expresses the oneness of the Church and not simply its multiplicity, although Zizioulas is willing to concede that practice has often fallen short of theory:

"But the multiplicity is not to be subjected to the oneness; it is constitutive of the oneness. The two, oneness and multiplicity, must coincide in an institution which possesses a twofold ministry: the ministry of the first one and the ministry of the "many" (the heads of the local Churches)" (Zizioulas J. p.136).

Moltmann deals with this problem but begins by appearing to be highly critical of the whole idea of episcopacy. He is dismissive of the monarchical episcopate, where the justification runs: "one God - one Christ - one bishop - one Church." ("The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit - Trinitarian Pneumatology", in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 37, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1984 p. 294). But he later explains his critical stance (ibid.):

"The pneumatology of the monarchical episcopate must therefore be drawn into the trinitarian pneumatology of the entire people of God if

the shortcomings and narrowness in the interpretation of the Holy Spirit which I criticised at the beginning are to be overcome".

It is noteworthy that a leading Lutheran theologian should find himself so close to an Orthodox colleague.⁹ Zizioulas then goes on to say that the same is true at the local level, with the ministry of the "one" - the bishop and the "many" - the ministries of the other ministers and the laity. Thus the important principle is demonstrated - that the bishop cannot exist without the community, and vice versa. The community forms part of the ontology of episcopacy, and episcopacy forms part of the ontology of the community. Zizioulas then returns to the theme he has earlier stated concerning the centrality of the eucharist as an eschatological event establishing the context of the community.

This is so because the ecclesial institutions are eschatologically conditioned. They are sacramental because they exist in the "dialectic between history and eschatology, between the already and the not yet" (Zizioulas J. p138). In this context the institutions are not capable of having an individualistic ontology: they lose their self-sufficiency. They exist epiclestically and thus depend absolutely on the prayer of the community, the bidding of the epiclesis, the invocation of the Holy Spirit, which takes place most notably in the sacramental context of the eucharist. The ecclesiastical institutions do not thus find their "validity" in history, but in constant dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Within this conception of the Church institution eschatologically conditioned, Zizioulas notes that the notion of institution is itself deeply affected, or, one might say,

⁹ What is significant here is that they achieve this closeness in spite of holding widely divergent views concerning the nature of the Church. It can be said that Moltmann's ecclesiological views, expounded principally in The Church in the Power of the Spirit, (London, SCM Press, 1977), represent a radical representation of the classical German Protestant line, which is far removed from Zizioulas' Orthodox perspective.

transformed. He draws a difference in perspective between the Church as "instituted" by Christ and "constituted" by the Spirit:

"Christ in-stitutes and the Spirit con-stitutes. The difference between these two prepositions: in- and con- can be enormous ecclesiologically. The 'institution' is something presented to us as a fact, more or less a fait-accompli. As such, it is a provocation to our freedom. The con-stitution is something that involves us in its very being, something we accept freely, because we take part in its very emergence. Authority in the first case is something imposed on us, whereas in the latter it is something that springs from amongst us. ... The notion of communion must be made to apply to the very ontology of the ecclesial institutions, not to their dynamism and efficacy alone " (op.cit. p.140).

Eucharist and Catholicity

From this exploration of the relationship between Christology and pneumatology within the eucharistic framework, Zizioulas goes on to consider more practical implications of what he has previously demonstrated. He begins by exploring the implications for the catholicity of the Church. In the eucharist the Parousia is experienced now, namely the eschatological unity of all in Christ. So while it must be conceded that catholicity is ultimately an eschatological reality, nonetheless it is experienced here and now in the eucharist which is seen as an act, a synaxis of the local Church a " 'catholic' act of a 'catholic' Church " (op.cit. p.145).

In the context of the local eucharistic community catholicity means "wholeness", "fullness" and "totality" of the body of Christ. This wholeness was liturgically

demonstrated in the early Church by the gathering of the whole Christian community in one particular place for the one eucharist celebrated by the one bishop. Furthermore, this local eucharistic community was seen as a concretization and localisation of the general, the local revelation of the eschatological unity of all in Christ. In this context also, councils can be seen to have their place by reflecting the catholicity of all the local churches, their communion in Christ, their "unity in identity" (op.cit. p.158).

From this reflection upon the early Church's understanding of catholicity Zizioulas draws some general conclusions. Thus, first, he asserts that catholicity, as a quality or sign of the Church, depends totally on Christ. The foundation is thus a Christological one and not a moral one. The Church's catholicity is not founded on her obedience to Christ, because she does certain things or behaves in a certain way. "She is catholic first of all because she is the Body of Christ." (op.cit. p.158). Zizioulas notes that it has always been acknowledged that the invocation of the Holy Spirit in the eucharist is not only upon the elements, but also upon the people and upon all creation. All must be transformed by the Holy Spirit, looking towards the consummation in Christ at the eschaton. It is the Holy Spirit who achieves the historical reality of the Church. This means that all human attempts at reform cannot achieve catholicity. While the ecumenical movement expresses a laudable desire for unity, it cannot achieve it at a purely historical and sociological level. The Holy Spirit breaks into our world, is a visitation, but never becomes identified with it. As Zizioulas pertinently states:

"The eucharistic community constitutes a sign of the fact that the eschaton can only break through history and never be identified with it. Its call to catholicity is a call not to a progressive conquest of the world but to a 'kenotic' experience of the fight with the anticatholic demonic

powers and a continuous dependence upon the Lord and His Spirit "

(op.cit. p.161).

This faithful witness in humility and service, in prayer and worship as demonstrated in the eucharistic community, shows that the "ultimate essence of catholicity lies in the transcendence of all divisions in Christ" (op.cit. p.162), all divisions whether human or cosmic, historical, spiritual, material, social or individual. The catholicity of the Church thus implies a catholic perspective of human nature and a catholic perspective of existence in general. Within this analysis the relationship between Church and world takes on a new perspective because, as the world is created and sustained by God, and He constantly cares for it, there must be an intimate interrelation between the Church and the world, since it is the Church which, through the descent of the Spirit, transcends the world in herself and offers it to God in the eucharistic sacrifice.

Zizioulas then proceeds to enquire as to how this catholicity is to be reconciled with the existence of Order in the Church. He answers by first stating that because all ordinations take place at the eucharist no ministry can be conceived as existing parallel to that of Christ but only as identical with it. In this sense all categories of separation are transcended. And secondly, and related to this last point, ministry can only be understood within the community. Zizioulas rejects the rationale of ordained ministry presented in terms of either representation or delegation of authority as both being far too juridical and leading to the separation of the ordained and the community. To act on behalf of the community implies distance from it. Indeed Zizioulas is emphatic that no ministry can stand outside or above the community. This avoids the necessity to choose between an ontological and a functional understanding of ministry for "there is no charisma that can be possessed individually and yet there is no

charisma which can be conceived or operated but by individuals." (op.cit. p.164). So here we are back to Zizioulas' important distinction between the individual and the personal, for the mystery of the Church can only be understood and explained in terms of personal existence. And he quotes Martin Buber in I and Thou:

"Individuality makes its appearance by its differentiation from other individualities " (op.cit. p.166).

Zizioulas spells out the implications of what he has proposed. Ordination to the ministry within the eucharistic community carries the implication that the gift of the Holy Spirit cannot exist outside the ordained person's existential relationship to the ecclesial community. The ordained person is no mere functionary. The person must have a deep bond of love and any indelible character can only be compared with character imparted by love. If this charism were to be considered in isolation from the community it would be destined to die just in the same way that the Holy Spirit does not live outside the community within which He is the bond of love.

Zizioulas goes on to demonstrate furthermore that it is within this context that apostolic succession is to be understood, not as something that exists in absolute but only within a concrete community. He concludes that in the historical approach the Church transmits the apostolic kerygma and in the eschatological approach she applies the same and prophetically judges the vision she is supposed to maintain.

Zizioulas sees the necessity for a synthesis of these two approaches and suggests one along the following lines. He suggests that the Christ event must be seen as constituted pneumatologically. And in an important footnote he points out that it is the function of the Holy Spirit to open up being so that it may become relational. He

points out that understanding the Spirit as 'communion' was common to the Eastern and Western parts of the Church before the Great Schism:

"Without Pneumatology, ontology becomes substantialistic and individualistic. The Spirit was understood as 'communion' both by the Greek (e.g. St. Basil) and the Latin (e.g. St Augustine) Fathers - especially by the latter. But the importance of Pneumatology for ontology has never been a decisive one in Western thought " (op,cit. p. 182, footnote 37).

Within his conception of Christology conditioned pneumatologically no event can be considered except as a relational reality. Because of this the biblical conception of "corporate personality" is able to be applied to Christ. Without His body Christ is not Christ "but an individual of the worst type". (ibid.).

Christ's priority is a priority of inclusiveness; He contains us in Himself by the Spirit of God, indeed He is Christ in the Spirit. In the Spirit He contains our final destiny, not as an individual but as the Church, as being included in Him.

This has important consequences for our understanding of apostolicity. The entire notion becomes eschatologized, the apostles cannot be enclosed in the past. Apostolicity is best defined, not in terms of historical perspectives, but in terms of the Church listening to her own voice, which comes from her eschatological nature as a "sign" of a redeemed creation. This is based on Zizioulas' important emphasis that the Kerygma "is not an objectifiable norm but the Risen Christ, i.e. a living person " (op. cit. p. 184). In this pneumatological conditioning of history by eschatology the identification of the Church with the Kingdom does not present any dangers because it takes place epicleitically.

Zizioulas is asserting that the historical foundation of the Church must not be in itself taken as a guarantee for security:

"The epiclesis means ecclesialogically that the Church asks to receive from God what she has already received historically in Christ as if she had not received it at all, i.e. as if history did not count in itself "
(Zizioulas p.185).

This includes her understanding of apostolic succession. This tension between history and Kingdom may be described as longing for a "change of form", for transfiguration. This tension is resolved in the eucharist with its "tradition" - its historical consciousness and its "remembrance" of the future taking place at one and the same moment.

Zizioulas then considers some of the concrete implications for the life and structures of the Church. In the New Testament there are already two perspectives on the apostolic kerygma, one the notion of the paradosis historically transmitted from place to place and time to time; and the eschatological notion of vivification by the Spirit. There existed from early times a tendency for the former to predominate over the latter. This was only countered by, in Irenaeus, an emphasis upon the eucharist as the charismatic event.

This idea was developed in the Greek Fathers, especially St Athanasius and St Cyril, so that the spoken or written word conveys the divine presence and life-giving power only within the context of the eschatological eucharistic community. Zizioulas next surveys the institutionalisation of apostolic continuity which he considers took place from the earliest times, e.g. I Clement. He maintains that there exists the lack of a proper synthesis between the historical and eschatological perspective of continuity. This

produces the "institutional" versus "charismatic" dichotomy which is so prevalent today. He considers that the placing of ordination within the eucharist is the strongest indication that the so-called "institutional" does not constitute a self-defined norm. He places ordination within the more general eucharistic epiclesis and concludes:

"The epiclesis of the Spirit takes place within the eucharist, because the eucharist is the gathering of the whole people of God. Within this context it is necessary for the order of the laity to be an integral part for apostolic ministry." (op.cit. p.196).

In this context episcopal succession becomes an indispensable sign that the entire Church community carries apostolic continuity within itself.

Zizioulas believes that a theological review is necessary to establish the proper relation between the apostolic college in its local and in its universal manifestations. Such a relation can only be one of identity, so that neither of these manifestations may have priority over the other. He believes that apostolic succession has been viewed in a one sided and distorted way. It has ignored the eschatological image in the Bible of the apostles as a gathered body around Christ in his Kingdom. Instead it has been viewed in terms almost exclusively of historical process, the transmission of pure doctrine or the transmission of "pure" order have been major aspects of this view:

"Continuity with the apostles became inconceivable apart from the notion of a linear history" (ibid.).

Zizioulas also notes that the effects of this distortion are still with us today in ecumenical dialogue.

Finally he points out that there is nonetheless always a tension between history and the eschaton, between continuity and the "visit" and "presence" of the Kingdom. But he

believes that a synthesis is possible, indeed necessary in the Church to overcome the dilemma "institution or event." He believes that such a dilemma can be overcome by the understanding that the Kingdom is always present with a structure. There are two reasons for this. First, there is no Kingdom without the work of the Holy Spirit, who is by definition communion. Communion means community and community implies a structure. Secondly, the model of the Kingdom is Christ surrounded by the Apostles. This in itself is a structure and implies a structure for the Christian community: "a specificity of relations which are definable in accordance with the eschatological nature of the community." (op.cit. p.205). Indeed one may see such an ecclesial structure symbolised in the layout of many ancient basilicas: the bishop and presbyters, like Christ and the Apostles, seated in a semi-circle around the altar, along with the deacons and the laity, like the heavenly company, reflecting the description of heaven in the book of Revelation.

Rahner contributes to this view:

"'Individual' and 'community' in this sense are not realities which are opposed to each other or compete against each other. On the contrary, they are two sides of the one reality of achieved and redeemed persons which can only increase or decrease together and to the same degree "

(Rahner K. Theological Investigations Vol. II, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963 p.122).

Zizioulas claims that the structure that the Church developed was based upon the eucharist as reflecting the structure of the Kingdom. This structure, eschatologically-based, avoided the pitfalls of institutionalism. Because this structure is based around the eucharist it is based on something which is both institution and

event at one and the same time. In the eucharist the Kingdom comes epiclectically, the Christ-event is manifested. It is true that it is manifested through historical forms, but in such a way as not to be enthralled by them (See Zizioulas J. p.206).

The various ecumenical dialogues have, according to Zizioulas, been using false criteria for unity such as ministry or doctrine. Because, in the light of the Church relating to the apostles in and through the presence of the eschatological community in history, the ultimate criterion must be to what extent the actual form of the Church's ministry and message at this time reflects the presence of the eschatological community.

Ministry and Communion

In considering the ministry, Zizioulas outlines the shortcomings of scholastic theology.¹⁰ Ministry and ordination are treated as autonomous subjects, quite separate from Christology or the Trinity, and Christology anyway is further treated as autonomous, and not an integral part of Trinitarian theology and ecclesiology. This leads to Christomonistic tendencies, difficulties in relating the Church's ministry to that of Christ and approaching ministry and ordination from the aspect of the individual person (ontology or function) and not from the aspect of the concrete ecclesial community.

By contrast, Zizioulas elaborates the main elements of the Greek patristic tradition wherein there is only Christ's ministry in the Church. He maintains that this is in line

¹⁰ Zizioulas is sometimes a little too comprehensive in his application of the term "scholastic". He often uses it very loosely to describe all post-patristic western theology. In this context I also take it to be used in a more restricted sense, namely, as applying to the theology which developed in the Medieval Schools, and particularly by Thomas Aquinas. I also take it to apply to neo-scholasticism and the theology of the manuals formerly used in Roman Catholic seminaries and universities.

with the New Testament and means that, for the Greek Fathers, the necessity of choosing between an *opus operantis* and an *ex opere operato* is removed. The concept of any distance between the Church's and Christ's ministry is unhelpful. But he points out that his view is only possible "if we let our Christology be conditioned pneumatologically". (op.cit. p.210).

What the Spirit does through the ministry is an expression of the totality of the economy of salvation, past, present, but future as well. Furthermore the identification of the Church's ministry with that of Christ acquires existential importance; soteriological importance because the ministry of the Church realises in the present the saving work of Christ. This can only mean that the Saviour is personally present in the ministry.

Thirdly, Zizioulas proposes the view that in the Greek tradition the Holy Spirit becomes constitutive of the very relation between Christ and the ministry. An important consequence of this is that "there is a fundamental interdependence between the ministry and the concrete community of the Church as the latter is brought about by the *koinonia* of the Spirit." (op.cit. p.212). In 1 Cor 12 the only "definition" of the Body of Christ is in terms of ministry (membership equals *charismata* and vice versa). Ancient tradition supports this view. All ordinations are related to a concrete community and take place within the context of the eucharistic assembly.

Wesley Carr says a similar thing, albeit in a wider context: (Carr W. "Towards a Contemporary Theology of the Holy Spirit" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p. 505):

"The basis of this community's life is the Spirit, which both unites the community and creates the environment in which each individual is given his own value. ... Thus the Spirit becomes for the believing community more the environment in which it lives than an object of its consciousness."

Zizioulas notes (See op.cit. p.215) that discussions of ministry often concentrate on the way in which ministry originates and is transmitted in the Church, frequently understood in the scholastic tradition as transmission of potestas with or without a bestowal of a certain charisma. In this view, grace is objectified and reified, and can be possessed by an individual and transmitted.

The notion of causality has frequently characterised these discussions. (See Schulte R. 'Sacraments: 1. The Sacraments in General' in Sacramentum Mundi, V (1970) pp.379 ff.). See also Rahner K. The Church and the Sacraments, (London, Burns & Oates, 1963 pp.34 ff., 38 &96) who removes the notion of causality from the Aristotelian idea of cause and effect with the help of a theology of symbolism:

"Always and everywhere men have had the conviction that in gestures and rites and figurative representation, what is signified and pointed to, is in fact present, precisely because it is 'represented', and this conviction should not be rejected off-hand as 'analogy magic'."

Zizioulas comments on this traditional Western approach. He states that it has broadly followed two lines which have continued to influence contemporary theology. Either order has been seen as the transmission of grace or potestas from the ordaining minister to the ordinand as part of a linear and historical line of apostolic succession, or it has been seen as the delegation of authority to the ordained person from a

community which possesses the charismatic life. The first view represents what is generally seen as the "catholic" view and the second, related to the 'priesthood of all believers', is the Protestant view. Both of these views are rooted in the notion of causality, with its immediate origins in scholasticism. Zizioulas' line of argument casts doubt on these causal arguments. In the latter view we are still left with questions which do not admit of easy answers. We still have no answer to what precedes and causes ordination: is there a source of ministry, a generic principle such as the 'power' of the ordaining bishop or the 'priestly' nature of the community?

At the outset of this discussion it must be appreciated that there are no "non-ordained" persons in the Church, since baptism is clearly an ordination into the "ordo" of the laity. When this is forgotten, there is a tendency either for the layman to be an unnecessary element in the eucharistic community or for him to be a basis of all orders, a generic source or principle. Zizioulas suggests that the true position is that ordination is not something that follows from a pre-existing community but is, rather, an act that constitutes the community. He believes that we find it easier to think of the community first and secondly its ministry arising from it because we are so used to individualism in theology in general and ontology in particular. Alluding to 1 Cor. 12. 11 he puts forward the idea that, looked at through a pneumatological perspective, the Holy Spirit "unites by dividing" (op.cit. p.216). In this view ordination (and baptism is crucial here) creates the community "which thus becomes understood as the existential 'locus' of the convergence of the charismata" (ibid.). In this perspective charismatic event and historical existence coincide. Also apostolic succession is better understood in this context. Seen in this light the historical basis of the Church is not threatened by the existential-charismatic approach.

In the context of the Orthodox ordination rite it is clear that the meaning of the service is that ordination depends essentially on the prayer of the whole Church and is not just an objective transmission of grace by the bishop. However, it is necessary that the prayer be seen as epicletic, an action of God himself, rather than as assisting in some endeavour. It is this immediacy of the divine action that safeguards the charismatic nature of ministry, but expressed in the concrete local community understood as something constituted by the very event it constitutes. It is this link which is the key to all theology of ministry. It points to the divine action fully incarnating itself in creation and in history, yet without being ontologically dependent on it, or being "trapped" in history. In a footnote (no.26) Zizioulas points out the Rahner says very much the same thing in Theological Investigations Vol. II, (London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963 p.119 ff.):

"The supernatural grace of salvation is the grace of Christ. It is not merely 'merited' by him, but bears also something of the distinctive trait of him who as God-Man has introduced it in a definite manner into the world and has earned it by his act of salvation on the Cross. ... This grace, if we may put it this way, has an incarnational tendency."

And then, in a key passage, Zizioulas summarises his argument:

"If ordination is approached in this way, ministry ceases to be understood in terms of what it gives to the ordained and becomes describable only in terms of the particular relationship into which it places the ordained. If ordination is understood as constitutive of the community and if the community being the koinonia of the Spirit is by its nature a relational entity, ministry as a whole can be describable as a

complexity of relationships within the Church and in its relation to the world " (op.cit. p.218).

In defining relationship in this sense, Zizioulas is presuming it to have deep ontological and soterological meaning. This relational context manifests in the uniting of the community through the divisions into ministries, and in the reconciliation of relationships in Christ. Ministry, thus, renders the Church as a relational reality, a mystery of love.¹¹

In the next section of Being as Communion Zizioulas deals with the perennial theme of the "ontological" versus the "functional" view of ministry, a central feature of the Catholic/Protestant dichotomy. He sees these views of ministry as reflecting the same objectivistic and individualised ontology. The emphasis here is either on possessing something, or merely functioning or serving. Indeed the individualism implied here defeats the very end of ordination which is to make a human being a person and not an individual. Person, in this context, is an ecstatic being who is seen from the point of view of the overcoming of selfhood in relational being. Very significantly, for the purpose of this essay, he mentions Martin Buber and I and Thou in a footnote, in this context.

This line of argument may be seen to be entirely consistent with Zizioulas' general line that existence is determined by communion which qualifies and defines both 'ontology' and 'function'. One cannot possess anything as an individual within this realm of love.

¹¹ This view of the ordained ministry finds support from within an Anglican context, in the thinking of E.L. Mascall in Corpus Christi (London, Longmans, 1965), especially pp.13-20, where he reflects on the role of the bishop as critical in the relationship between the local and universal Church, and pp.26-34, where he reflects upon the role of the ordained ministry in the same terms as Zizioulas:
 "Furthermore, if the Spirit is the principle of love ... then it seems wholly appropriate that ordination should be recognised as the peculiar work of God the Spirit, who confers the apostolic and priestly character upon the new minister as something which is not to set him up as separate from or antagonistic to the Church, but to make him an agent and instrument of the Church's unity." (ibid. p.33).

Indeed it becomes invidious to talk of something possessed. Again it is equally invidious to say that someone in a state of love simply "functions". Love has its own dynamic and rationale which cuts a swathe through the individualistic ontology underlying so much Western theology during and since the Middle Ages.

In this context the use of the term 'priest' for, first, the bishop and then, secondly for the presbyter demonstrates that the authentic and original meaning is that Christ (the only priest) becomes a community, the Church, in the Holy Spirit. His priesthood is realised historically and existentially in a eucharistic community in which the head of the community is the one imaging Christ, the great High Priest. The head of the community offers the eucharistic sacrifice with and on behalf of the whole community:

"By understanding priesthood in this way we can see both how the order of the priest becomes relational (= a place in the community) and at the same time strictly specific and personal (no eucharistic community without this particular order and no confusion of orders.)"
(op.cit. p.231).

But Zizioulas stresses that the relational character of the ministry does not imply that ordination means nothing for the persons themselves. Any isolation of a person from the other members of the Body implies death. This has implications for the subject of re-ordination on the one hand and the eschatological decisiveness of ordination on the other.

In relation to unity, Zizioulas sees ministry as a vital element in this important matter. The ministry stands at the crux of the networks that make up the Church as a relational reality, a community and at the point of connection with other communities spatially and temporally. Zizioulas uses the old Latin saying "unus christianus nullus

christianus" in relation to eucharistic communities: for the same is true - a community in isolation from other churches is no community at all. The ministry must reflect this catholicity through its unifying nature. Indeed Zizioulas believes that the eucharistic nature of the Church inevitably implies this catholicity of particular communities, even though these communities are separated by space and time. Zizioulas does not allow an individualised or a universalized conception of unity, but only one that is rooted in the local eucharistic community. It is in the context of the local church that the bishop's role has been so important in respect of unity, under the two forms of apostolic succession and conciliarity.

Under the influence of a certain conception of causality and an objectified ontology, apostolic succession came to be thought of as a possession capable of being transmitted. This view was unacceptable to the Reformers. But looking at it in the light of the local community and the relational nature of the ministry it becomes possible to maintain that the bishop succeeds the apostles not in himself as an individual but as the head of the community which is named in the very prayer of ordination. Zizioulas has already drawn out the implications for apostolic succession: he does the same for conciliarity. He sees the sole participation of the diocesan bishop in councils as arising from his position within the community and not in terms of individual authority (See op.cit. p.241). This is underscored by the historical insistence upon only diocesan bishops being allowed to vote in a synod, and the emphasis upon no decision of a council being authoritative unless it had been "received" by the communities.

When Zizioulas turns finally to the question of the "validity" of ministry he has some important observations to make. He asserts that "validity" is essentially a juridical term

and implies that the ministry can be isolated from the rest of ecclesiology. "Validity" is then judged by certain "objective" criteria, ignoring the point that these criteria were originally integral and organic parts of the concrete eucharistic community and make no sense apart from their context in the community.

So by looking at a community first and then at the criteria it becomes clear that "the recognition of ministries becomes in fact a recognition of communities in an existential sense". (op.cit. p.244), and that furthermore:

"This means that a difference in ministerial form as such cannot determine the recognition of a ministry"(ibid.),

although the eucharistic structure implies something permanent because of its existential and eschatological nature. So too the eucharistic structure implies identity with past communities, especially the original communities and those of the present. It also entails openness to the future.

In the light of what he has said so far, Zizioulas is able to offer a way forward ecumenically. He suggests that it should now be possible for divided ecclesial communities to recognise each other qua communities relating to God and the world through their ministries rather than by recognising each other's 'orders'. He calls this a more existential form of rapprochement since it arises naturally from the mystery of Christ and the Spirit.

The Local Church in a Perspective of Communion

Zizioulas approaches the nature of the local church in an historical analysis. He asserts that in the early Church the "local Church" was the Church of a city, and its leader and eucharistic president was the bishop. In this setting the bishop was the president of

one eucharist, surrounded by the orders, the presbyters, deacons and laity. With the creation of parishes the deacon and the bishop, apart from a role as an administrator, became virtually redundant, while the presbyter took on the role of "mass-specialist", "thus leading to the medieval ecclesiological decadence in the West and to the well-known reactions of the Reformation " (op.cit. p.251). Zizioulas sees the only escape from this confusion to be the recreation of small episcopal dioceses which would enable bishops to know their flock, reduce administration, make it possible for the collegial character of the presbyterate to reappear and make it unnecessary to maintain the uncanonical institution of the assistant bishop.

Zizioulas then considers what makes a Church "local" and what makes a local body a "Church". A Church becomes local when the Christ-event takes root in a local situation which is constituted by natural, social and cultural aspects which comprise the life and attitudes of the indigenous people. But it must also be remembered that absorption of a culture, while making it local, does not make a community a Church. This can only happen if the eucharistic perspective plays a decisive role. In the light of the eucharist the Church becomes an anticipation of the eschatological community. The essential structural elements that make a community both 'local' and 'Church' are as follows. First the Church must make efforts to reach the pluralistic elements in our modern societies, especially particular professional, intellectual and social conditions. Secondly, such groups should be encouraged to seek experience of the Church as a gathering of all, as an all-inclusive transcendence of all divisions. Thirdly, the common geographical place provides a meeting point of the disparate groups, and fourthly, a ministry of local unity which facilitates the transcendence of social and cultural divisions.

As regards the relationship between locality and universality, Zizioulas conceives the catholicity as not something which is contrasted to locality but is rather an indispensable aspect of the local Church. In order to be not just local but also Church it follows that a local Church must be in communion with all the other local churches in the world. For this to happen certain elements are essential. First, the concerns of one local church must be the concerns of all. Secondly, a common basis of the vision and understanding of the Gospel must exist between a local Church and the others and thirdly, certain structures must be provided to facilitate that communion. This must, however, not become some sort of imposition of a "superstructure" on the local Churches. Structures must maintain a network, not become a new form of Church. It is wrong to introduce into a local Church cultural and other dimensions which are foreign to a particular local context:

"Culture cannot be a monolithically universal phenomenon without some kind of demonic imposition of one culture over the rest of the cultures " (ibid.).

Zizioulas also considers the local Church in the context of confessional division because the latter is now added to cultural pluralism. He believes there is a further parallel. He asks if we can say that the eucharist brings the different confessions together, which is what the practice of intercommunion implies? In response to this Zizioulas asks two questions. First he asks if it is possible for a confessional body per se to be regarded as Church. He believes that it is not because ecclesiality is inseparably linked to locality:

"A Church must incarnate people, not ideas or beliefs. A confessional Church is the most disincarnate entity there is; this is precisely why its

context is usually borrowed from one or other of the existing cultures and is not a locality which critically embraces all cultures " (op. cit. p. 260).

Secondly he asks if a local Church can be regarded as truly local and truly Church if it is in a state of confessional division. He believes we must question the ecclesial status of confessional churches on the grounds that it is difficult, if not impossible for them to be a local event "incarnating Christ and manifesting the Kingdom in a particular place" (ibid.). He sees that a more fruitful ecumenical way forward would be to work together from the starting point of the nature of the local Church. He believes that this cannot be done overnight because confessionalism is deeply rooted in the history of the confessional bodies. But he is also emphatic that no progress can be made towards ecclesial unity "as long as confessionalism prevails" (ibid.).

Zizioulas presents us with a new Orthodox perspective on the person within the community of the Church. He is aware that his relational mode of thinking presents a radical challenge to Western ecclesiology, but a challenge that may be fruitful ecumenically.

The Spirit and Personal Encounter

Zizioulas believes that the Orthodox Churches have much to offer here towards a synthesis of Pneumatology and Christology, but honestly acknowledges that Orthodox theology in this regard is somewhat underdeveloped also. While this may be true, it is quite clear that the Western theology of the Spirit is even less developed. Such a situation grew from the time of St. Augustine's psychological analogy of the Trinity. Whatever Augustine's intention may have been, his analogy inevitably leaves us with

an impression that the Holy Spirit is an "It" not a "He". By and large, the Spirit has been represented as a bond between Christ and the Christian, but a bond is not a person as the Persons and things between which it is a bond. The "Filioque" addition to the Creed in the West has not helped this situation because, in spite of the cautions of theologians, it has been seen in Orthodoxy to have reinforced both the notion of the unity and the notion of the duality of the Godhead, and worked against both the doctrine of the Spirit and the third person of the Godhead and the equality of the Spirit with the Father and the Son as God. It is this latter position, in contradistinction to the Western line, which Zizioulas espouses and advocates as truly representing the Orthodox understanding. Furthermore this western preoccupation has led to a "dead end" where the Holy Spirit has all but vanished from the mind of the Western Church, having been identified as the immanence of God or as the Spirit of Christ. It could be argued that this blind passage of pneumatology in the West has meant that theology has failed to reflect in a logical way upon the dynamics of the Church as a human community; and because of this failure, theologians also failed to reflect upon the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the living God in the Church: "the Lord and Giver of Life".

With the substantial clues that Zizioulas has furnished it is to these dynamics that we now turn, and the proper role of the Holy Spirit in relation to these dynamics. How exactly do we see Him operating within the dynamism of the Church as a human community and how does the Holy Spirit bring about the *koinonia* of Christians, and what implications does this have for the "ontology of communion" previously mentioned?

It would not be true, however, to say that these questions have been entirely neglected by theologians of other traditions, especially in recent years. While it is true, as

Zizioulas implies, that the Roman Catholic Church has officially failed to assimilate Pneumatology that does not mean that theologians of that Church are failing to tackle the issues, as well as others besides. (See Kittel G. A Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. VI, Michigan, Erdmans, 1965 p.409; Wheeler Robinson H. The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit, Glasgow, Collins, 1962, especially Chapter VI - The Holy Spirit and the Church pp.123-139, also Warnach V. Church in Bauer J. B. Ed. Encyclopaedia of Biblical Theology Vol. I, London, Sheed & Ward, 1970 p. 101 and Karl Rahner writes of the dynamic element in the Church under the Holy Spirit; see The Dynamic Element in the Church, New York, Herder, 1964 pp. 50-53, and quotes Pope Pius XII in support, in his encyclical letter Mystici Corporis, 1938)

Indeed it was F. D. Schleiermacher (1768-1834) who opened up a new line of thought here (see Sykes S. Friedrich Schleiermacher, London, Lutterworth, 1971, pp. 16-43; also Wheeler Robinson H. The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit, London, Collins, 1962, p.129-130) when he approached theology not as the science of God but as the science of the Church's experience of God. At an early stage this was an approach to theology from an existential standpoint. This meant that he was concerned, not with the question of the deity of the Spirit, but with Him as the Holy Spirit of the Church, or as the Spirit of and in the Christian community.

This theological line of enquiry is consistent with the emphasis we have so far observed in relation to the interpersonal and the dialogic nature of the Christian experience. Contemporary theologians such as Schillebeeckx and Rahner have emphasised the importance and value of human experience in theology, and which has led them to value the interhuman dimension. This has further led them to highlight interpersonal existential encounter or dialogue as a fundamental mode of human existence. Likewise

this is the major emphasis in the writings of Martin Buber, who is himself a bridge with other nineteenth and twentieth century thinkers and philosophers who similarly emphasise the experimental "event" nature of human existence. Among these Kierkegaard and Heidegger particularly stand out. In relation to the interhuman dimension there is a similar emphasis upon the breaking down of the interhuman and of community described as "alienation", although no similarly singular prescription for its overcoming. Buber posits the building of community through a dialogic process, while Christian theologians emphasise the necessary transcendent element in this and Zizioulas particularly focuses on the human, the personal and the interpersonal in his presentation of the overcoming of alienation through rebirth into the Church, the place where relations between human beings are healed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Zizioulas places this theological omission or forgotten emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit in a wider historical context. Joseph Haroutunian (See Spirit in Richardson A. Ed. A Dictionary of Christian Theology, London, SCM, 1968 pp. 324 ff.) draws attention to the same thing, namely, a new understanding of the work and the Person of the Holy Spirit through the emphasis upon the people of God and the interpersonal in the Church.

Haroutunian asserts that he has followed suggestions found in Augustine and Schleiermacher to suggest that a fruitful approach to the doctrine of the Spirit is through the nature and reality of the Church. In line with Irenaeus' doctrine of "the two hands of God", one might well say that Jesus Christ is the one and the Church is the other hand of God in his saving work.

Haroutunian believes that Irenaeus' doctrine was not able to bear full fruit in the life of the Church because the work of the Holy Spirit has been associated with Word and

Sacrament as the principal means of grace. The Spirit was thus more often thought of as an 'infusion' rather than a person. If we think of the Spirit in the personal and existential context of the "mutual actions of human beings as moral agents" (ibid.) within the christian freedom of the Body of Christ a different picture emerges:

"We thus get our clue for the work of the Spirit not only from the efficacy of preaching and the sacraments but also, and inseparably from these, from the efficacy of the transactions of God's people for their mutual work of salvation from death to life. It is now seen that the mutual building-up of God's people, in their very imperfection as 'at once righteous and sinners', is the proper locus of the activity of the Spirit who is holy and makes holy " (ibid.).

Haroutunian feels that the necessity of communion in the Church as a means of grace has often been underplayed, if not denied. Traditional theology has taught that the Church as institution is the means of grace through its cultus and thereby has denied a true and authentic role for the Holy Spirit. He goes on to demonstrate that this tendency is contrary to tradition. Moses, Jesus, prophets, priests and kings have been instruments of grace. The incarnation establishes the principle that salvation is by the agency of men and women. It is Jesus' communion with his people that was and is a prime means of grace. Indeed Edward Schillebeeckx maintains that our revelation of God's grace is revealed neither from above or from below, but from the encounter, the transactions (to use Haroutunian's word) of human beings in our history. He develops this theme in Christ the Christian Experience in the Modern World (London, SCM, 1980). This work begins with an extended analysis of experience. At the beginning of the first chapter (op.cit. p.29):

"In my view this gulf between faith and experience is one of the fundamental reasons for the present-day crisis among Christians who are faithful to the Church." He says that (op.cit. p.31) "experience means learning through "direct" contact with people and things. It is the ability to assimilate perceptions," and (ibid.) "experience is gained in a dialogical fashion: through an interplay between perception and thought, thought and perceptions."

He maintains that we are moving away from the Cartesian dualism of subjectivity and objectivity. And so for religious life, it is human life in the world but experienced as encounter and in this respect as a disclosure of God. For it is in experiencing that we identify what is experienced.

Much earlier Schillebeeckx had made a similar point from within a fairly traditionalist exposition of sacramental theology. In Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God (1959) which is a shorter revision of an earlier work De Sacramentele Heilseconomie (1952) (published in English as Christ the Sacrament, London, Sheed & Ward, 1963), Schillebeeckx's approach to knowledge is existential and personal and encounter or dialogue is the fundamental mode of existence for the human person.

Schillebeeckx begins at the beginning: with creation and with St Augustine. Augustine divided the gradual coming into being of the Church into three great phases. First came the Church of the Devout Heathen (op.cit. p.5 ff.), those who listened with an upright heart, dimly suspecting that a redeeming God was concerned for their salvation, expressed in a motley collection of religious forms and aspirations. It was a providential sketch of the true Church to come, and its attempts to give form to its religious aspirations bears witness to the truth that grace is never given "just inwardly,

but confronts us also in visible shape" (op.cit. p.9). Secondly comes the Church of Israel; through all the ups and downs of its history God sought to lead his people to a final and definitive faithfulness and its visible religion formed a church which was already a visible presence of grace. However, Israel was not faithful, until God himself raised up the man Jesus in whom was concentrated the entirety of mankind's vocation to faithfulness (op.cit. p.13).

Our personal communion with God can only take place, explicitly or implicitly, by an interpersonal relationship with the man Jesus (op.cit. p.13 ff.). This comes about because Christ himself is the Church, an invisible communion in grace with the living God manifested in visible human form. Moreover, because the saving acts of the man Jesus are performed by a divine person, they have a divine power to save. And because this divine power to save appears to us in visible form, the saving activity of Jesus is sacramental because the sacrament is a divine communication of salvation in such a way that the bringing of this salvation takes on visible bodily form. So human encounter with Jesus is the sacrament of the encounter with God (op.cit. pp.13-47).

Schillebeeckx goes on (op.cit. p.47) to answer a problem - how do we encounter the glorified and risen Christ who has disappeared from the visible horizon of our life, from our sight? As the Risen Lord he represents God reaching down to us for our salvation in an initiative which is constant. So the basis of any such encounter must involve the resurrection and on an initiative on his part which makes his heavenly corporeality in some way visible in our earthly sphere. "Mutual human availability is possible only in and through man's corporeality" (op.cit. p.51). He can only make himself visibly present by taking up earthly realities into his glorified saving activity. And this is what

the sacraments are: the face of redemption turned visibly towards us, so that we encounter the living Christ in a personal action (op.cit. pp.47-54).

In moving on from the primordial sacrament to the separated sacraments we also move on from the earthly Jesus to the Church. It is impossible, Schillebeeckx argues, to think of Jesus as man and Messiah without his redemptive community (op.cit. p.55). This means that through his messianic life as servant of God and by his death he gives rise to the Church of which he is head: in St Augustine's words "moritur Christus, ut fiat Ecclesia." (In Joh. Evangelium tr. 9 No. 10 - PL, 35 Col. 1463). Schillebeeckx says (op.cit. p.56):

"The inward communion in grace with God in Christ becomes visible in and is realised through the outward social sign. Thus the essence of the Church consists in this, that the final goal of grace achieved by Christ becomes visibly present in the whole Church as a visible society."

The Church is not just a means of salvation but the visible realisation of salvation. Sacramentality means for him outwardness and the interpersonal as the vehicle of the divine. The economy of salvation presupposes "mutual human availability" (op.cit. p. 51) and is "through man's corporeality". And the communion in grace which is the Church must also be visible, or corporeal, since it presupposes "mutual human availability". This is the point we are making here: not so much the sacramental emphasis of this early work of Schillebeeckx, but that it points to human beings as moral agents within the koinonia, the "locus" of the activity of the Holy Spirit.

Another theologian who adopts a somewhat similar line is Karl Rahner. (See Theological Investigations Vol. XVI, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1979 pp. 24-34). His basic metaphysical stance is phenomenological, existential and personalist.

In this personalist analysis, the Church and the sacraments are defined as encounter.

Fr. Yves Congar adopts a similar line in Esquisses du Mystère de L'Église (Paris, Edition du Cerf, 1953).

This theme - that the Incarnation establishes the principle that salvation is by the agency of men and women - the proper locus of the activity of the Holy Spirit - is also alluded to by Paul Tillich. That he is talking in the same context as the other writers is demonstrated by the fact that he sets his discussion within the context of Part III of Systematic Theology, Vol. III (London, James Nisbet, 1964), entitled "the Divine Spirit" and within Chapter XXVII, entitled "The Spiritual Presence and the Ambiguities of Religion". Relevant to our theme are those passages where Tillich considers what he calls the external functions of the Church. In particular he focuses (op.cit. p.201) on the "constitutive functions of the Churches", which must always be present in a church. For example, receiving is an essential function because every church is dependent on the New Being as it is manifest in the Christ and is made real in the Spiritual Community. This is true for the whole church as well as individual members. If a church demands that its individual members receive the life of the New Being but itself as church refuses to receive, it becomes either a "static hierarchical system" (ibid.) or "a religious group with private experiences which makes the transition into secularism" (ibid.). Receiving also includes the function of mediation through the presence of the Holy Spirit, the Word and the Sacraments. The person who receives, also mediates; but also reception takes place continually because so does mediation. In fact reception and mediation are the same, "the church is priest and prophet to itself" (ibid.). The preacher is a listener, and the listener a potential

preacher. A true process of mediation excludes the possibility of the establishing of an hierarchy which mediates while everyone else merely receives.

Tillich, furthermore, specifies the nature of this mediation. It occurs in communal services where all take part in mediation and in the more "traditional" pastoral areas where lay people respond to priestly mediation. But he emphatically makes the point that even this is a two-way process. The "counsellor", traditionally charged with the cure of souls, ("Seelsorge") is never subject alone and should never make his or her counsellees objects to be correctly manipulated for good or ill:

"But if the mediation is determined by the Spiritual Presence, the counsellor subjects himself to the judgement and demands that he tries to communicate. ... He who is grasped by the Spirit can speak to one who needs his help in such a way that the Spirit can get hold of the other one through him, and thus help becomes possible. For Spirit can heal only what is open to Spirit " (op.cit. p.202).

It is these last two sentences which seem to summarise not only what Tillich has been saying, but also what is meant by the interpersonal being the locus of the work of the Holy Spirit. Tillich seems here to be emphasising that the Person-ness of the Spirit is manifested in the function of mediation, a moral function of persons to persons. This pneumatological function is dialogic "whoever mediates must himself respond, and whoever responds mediates to the mediator " (ibid.). This emphasis on the mutuality of receiving, as a corrective to hierarchicalism, which Tillich elaborates, is in line with other authors who have been quoted in this context and who emphasise the principle of dialogue as the mode of the encounter of persons in the Church. Dialogue and

communion are both ways of giving and receiving, of mediation, a condition where one person ministers to another in the power of the Spirit. So Haroutunian states:

"There is no grace - faith, and hope and love - that a man does not receive in the Church and at the hand of his brother. It is true that his brother is saved and sinner, free and in bondage, like himself, imperfect all his days. Still, he may receive life in the Church, that is, in his transactions with his fellow men " ('Spirit' in Richardson A. Ed. A Dictionary of Christian Theology, London, SCM, 1969, p.325).

In the light of what has been said above we may now reflect upon the proper contribution of the Holy Spirit. Haroutunian believes that we must use the same logic in talking of the mission of the Church as attributed to God and his Spirit as we use of the mission of Jesus Christ as attributed to Jesus who reconciles us with God. It is him as a free human agent who achieves this work through His obedience and faithfulness. "Hence the Church has believed the Son became flesh for our salvation." (ibid.). In the same way the mission of the Church requires a distinction between the Son and the Spirit. As the doctrine of God the Son points to the ground of the mission of Jesus in the Godhead, so too the doctrine of God the Holy Spirit points to the mission of the Spirit in the Godhead. Haroutunian applies this same line of argument to ecclesiology, the same necessity holds "a clear view of the agency of the people of God in the sanctification of the Church requires a distinction between the Son and the Holy Spirit. ... God does his saving work with 'his two hands', the Son and the Holy Spirit, or Jesus Christ and the Church " (ibid.). Furthermore this teaching is theologically validated inasmuch that as God was in Jesus Christ, so is He in the Church, sanctifying the people through their mutual ministry of building up the body of Christ:

"So that, *mutatis mutandis*, the Holy Spirit is to Christ's people as the Son is to Jesus; so that as Christ is the Son, the Church is the bearer of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father. The Church believes in the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Godhead because those who are his agents are persons as Jesus is a person " (*ibid.*).

Zizioulas makes a similar distinction in respect of the work of the Son, in that it is only the Son who becomes incarnate, who becomes history. If we introduce time and history into either Father or Spirit we deny then their unique roles in the economy: "to be involved in history is not the same as to become history " (Zizioulas J. p.30). So if becoming history is the part of the Son, where does the Holy Spirit fit in? Precisely because He liberates the Son from the limitations of history. The Son succumbs to historical existence through His death on the cross, but the Spirit raises him from the dead. The Spirit is beyond history, so if he acts in history "he does so in order to bring into history the last days, the eschaton " (*ibid.*). Also it is the Holy Spirit who makes Christ to be, not an individual, put a person, not 'one' but 'many'. Zizioulas points out that since apostolic times the Holy Spirit has been associated with *koinonia* (See 2 Cor. 13.13):

"Pneumatology contributes to Christology this dimension of communion" (*ibid.*),

and this is so because:

"the Holy Spirit is not one who aids us in bridging the distance between Christ and ourselves, but he is the person of the Trinity who actually realises in history that which we call Christ, this absolutely relational entity, our Saviour ... Between the Christ-truth and ourselves there is

no gap to fill by the means of grace. The Holy Spirit, in making real the Christ-event in history, makes real at the same time Christ's personal existence as a body or community. Christ does not exist first as truth and then as communion; He is both at once. All separation between Christology and ecclesiology vanishes in the Spirit " (op.cit. p.112).

Zizioulas would agree with Haroutunian's assertion that :

"The Church believes in the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Godhead because those who are his agents are persons as Jesus is a person " (Spirit in Richardson A. Ed. A Dictionary of Christian Theology, London, SCM, 1969 p.236).

But Zizioulas is more successful in explaining the "how" of the personal. He sees Christ's existence applied to our historical existence not abstractly or individualistically, but in and through a community. This community is brought to birth out of ordinary existence through the conversion from individualism to personhood:

"The resurrectional aspect of baptism is therefore nothing other than incorporation into the community " (Zizioulas J. p.114).

The idea of mediation, which is strong in Tillich and Haroutunian, is also attested to by Zizioulas, who sees that the application of Christ's existence to ours is nothing other than the realisation of the Church community. This community is born anew as the Body of Christ and exists in the same communion which existed in Christ's historical existence.

It should be noted here that this emphasis, which we are discovering, upon communion and the work of the Holy Spirit has also figured historically in the friction between Roman Catholic Ecclesiology and Protestant theology, the Catholic sacramental theory

putting great emphasis on the visible reality of the Church, and the Protestant theory, emphasising the vertical relationship, the individual covenant relationship, and playing down the sociological or visible reality of the Church. It has been customary to talk of Catholic and Protestant Ecclesiologies as respectively horizontal and vertical ecclesiology. (See Congar Y.M.J. Christ, Our Lady and the Church, London, Longmans, 1957, pp.5 ff., also Mascall E.L. Corpus Christi, London, Longmans, 2nd Ed. 1955 pp.20. ff.). In the Catholic view the Church is viewed as a mystery which consists in a complexus or network of relations through space and time, the principal relation is that of Christ to the Church as his body, a relation which founds a real communion of persons within the Church. The vertical factor originated as a reaction against this, and, in fact, against any kind of mediation. In this context it is interesting to note in passing how close Tillich has moved towards the Catholic position in accepting the centrality of mediation. Melancthon's words express this vertical factor most concisely:

"The Church is an assembly bound together not by succession in office, but by God's Word. It is reborn wherever God renews true doctrine and bestows his Holy Spirit " (De Ecclesia et auctoritate Verbi Dei, 1593 Corpus Reformatorum XXIII p.598).

In this theology "salvation is exclusively God's act, and that the essential tie which binds us to the source of salvation is wholly spiritual and divine, and not at the same time both visible and invisible, because mediated by a visible Church." (Congar, Y.M.J. Christ, Our Lady and the Church, London, Longmans, 1957, p.8). Congar continues (op.cit. p.10):

"To extend the spatial imagery ... vertical ecclesiology, implying acts of God wholly gratuitous and therefore free, unpredictable and discontinuous, might be described from the human standpoint as the dots in a sort of stipple engraving."

This is also the implication of Barthian theology. In Church Dogmatics (Vol. IV Edinburgh, Clark, 1962 pp.681-901) Barth questioned the view that the Church possessed a divinely-given structure continuously visible in history especially in terms of creeds, ministry and sacraments; for Barth the Church was to be thought of as occurring in history as a discontinuous series of faith-events. Rudolf Bultmann adopted a similar position; the true Church was an eschatological phenomenon which might possess a congregational visibility but was nevertheless a part of the age to come, secularly invisible, but to be grasped by the eye of faith. It has to be admitted, however, that Bultmann has some relevant and valuable things to say about the Church and yet there is also a certain inadequacy in his treatment, particularly an almost complete lack of a positive doctrine of the Holy Spirit. His basic approach to theology is from an existentialist point of view.¹²

Bultmann's theological approach is strongly existentialist and demonstrates a suspicion of the organised Church that is not entirely without justification. He maintains that the Church tends to usurp what rightly belongs to the individual and has frequently taken away from the individual the real possibility of decision. It can make the gospel a tradition to be unthinkingly accepted. Here again we see the very real problem of the

¹² See Theology of the New Testament, SCM Vol. 1 1952 & Vol. II 1955, especially pp.91-106, 266, 304-310 & 440-446.

For Bultmann's views concerning the nature of human community in general see "Formen menschlicher Gemeinschaft" (Tübingen, 1952), English tr. "Forms of Human community" in Essays, London, SCM Press, 1955.

J. Macquarrie (An Existentialist Theology, London, Penguin, 1973) gives an excellent account of Bultmann's theology. Bultmann's views on the Church are very adequately treated in Ch 9 pp.202-216.

ministry in terms of the relationship between the ministers and the ministered. If ministry disables the Christian people it becomes the means of destroying the liberty of the Christian man or woman; rather than a means of assisting and encouraging liberty. Again, the Church, as an organisation, tends to approximate to the pattern of *das Man*, the inauthentic way of being-with-others. Bultmann acknowledges the necessity of administration and government, but he also asserts that, as soon as this happens, some measure of depersonalisation is almost inevitable. But in general it must be acknowledged that Bultmann has little positively to contribute to our understanding of *koinonia*. This is one of the weakest points in existentialist philosophy itself and in any theology which attacks its problems from an existentialist standpoint. However admirable its treatment of individual Christian experience, it fails to make the transition to Christian community. The views of Barth and Bultmann on the Church were really the re-emergence of the old orthodox Protestant view of the Church. The priority was given to the "religion of the Spirit" over institutionalised religion. Emil Brunner said much the same thing in *The Misunderstanding of the Church*, London, Lutterworth, 1952). For him, as for Barth, the ideal Church was a small local organism.

Tillich does not appear to accept this Protestant emphasis exclusively, but sees the necessity for "catholic substance". He defines this as "the concrete embodiment of the Spiritual Presence.", (Tillich P. *Systematic Theology Vol. III*, London, James Nisbet, 1964, p.260), namely the very thing we have been moving towards - seeing the work of the Spirit (Tillich's "Spiritual Presence") as primarily in the efficacy of the transactions of God's people for their mutual work of salvation. The Holy Spirit's "concrete embodiment" is the network of human relations in the Church. As Maurice B. Schepers observes (Paul Tillich on the Church in O'Meara, T.A. and Weisser C.D.

Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought, London Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965, p.249) the Catholic view is "in at least verbal agreement with Paul Tillich - that the Church is a community of faith and love in absolute dependence on Christ, whom Tillich would designate as the source of New Being." Fr. Schepers goes on to say (op.cit. p.250) that the difficulty which underlies this is what exactly dependence on Christ entails. When persons "depend on Christ" what follows as far as their relations one to another? Can it be said that horizontal relations in the Church, insofar as they are established by Christ, are necessarily involved in a definition of the Church? Catholic tradition would say that they are because the Church is conceived as a real communion among persons. Tillich further elaborates the importance of this "horizontal" dimension because for him it reaches to a far wider unity: (Systematic Theology Vol. III, University of Chicago Press, 1964, p.214):

"According to the multidimensional unity of life, the dimension of spirit includes all other dimensions - everything visible in the whole of the universe. The spirit reaches into the physical and biological realm by the very fact that its basis is the dimension of self-awareness. Therefore, it cannot be expressed in spoken words only. It has a visible side, as is manifest in the face of men, which expresses bodily structure and personal spirit. This experience of our daily life is the premonition of the sacramental unity of matter and Spirit."

This insight of Tillich's - that "the dimension of spirit includes all other dimensions" is echoed in Zizioulas' understanding of catholicity, which is "the transcendence of all divisions in Christ," (Zizioulas J. p.162) and he adds;

"This should be understood absolutely and without any reservations. It covers all areas and all dimensions of existence whether human or cosmic, historical or eschatological, spiritual or material, social or individual, etc. ... no dualistic dichotomies can be accepted."

Tillich also states that it is a misunderstanding of man's multidimensional unity, a limiting of the nature of man as conceived simply in terms of conscious self-awareness of intellect and will, that results in only words and doctrine being allowed to bear the Spiritual Presence. In this misunderstanding no Spirit-bearing objects or acts, nothing sensuous which affects the unconscious, can be accepted.

Here we see Tillich sounding a warning note against the rationalistic tendency in theology, the note sounded a century earlier by Kierkegaard and the later existentialists who have rebelled against Descartes and the general direction of western philosophy in its attempts to understand human beings by those categories applicable to non-human being, the "misunderstanding of man's multidimensional unity" as Tillich calls it. Indeed it seems clear that the emphasis we have observed in many contemporary theologians, Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox upon the Church in all its aspects not simply as an institution, but as a mode of existence, a way of being, bound to the being of the world and of God, is paralleled by much modern philosophy which places emphasis upon the unique nature of human existence as event, as truth in being, as "thereness".

For Christians this mode of existence in the Church is fundamentally epicletic, as Zizioulas and others have observed. In contemporary philosophers there is considerable emphasis on freedom and autonomy. It is to the credit of the theologians so far mentioned that this challenge is taken up and turned on its head: namely that

unredeemed human existence is based irrevocably under necessity and is "unfree" and that the only true "free" life is lived in the Spirit, which is life lived in the Church with other Christians in their mutual ministry or mediation. We will note in a future chapter that Karl Rahner puts emphasis upon the unbridled desire for autonomy which characterises so much in modern life, intellectually, sociologically and politically. The argument of Being as Communion is that this autonomy is profoundly unchristian and does violence to the person as conceived in the image of God.

If one could summarise in one sentence the work which the Holy Spirit achieves in the Church one would say that He works at reversing and overcoming this desire for autonomy and works towards the healing of the destructive effects of it in individual persons and persons in community. Haroutunian considers that the work of the Spirit is the work of Christ, namely that of reconciliation within the Church and the human community. This latter is an important emphasis, particularly in focusing on the Spirit's work of reconciliation in the world, an emphasis often overlooked, but a truly evangelical insight, since the Holy Spirit is promised to all mankind. This promise is enunciated in the Prophecy of Joel (3.1) and reaffirmed by St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2.17).

Zizioulas touches on this point (Zizioulas J. p.160) in his analysis of the meaning of catholicity as "wholeness": the absolute antithesis of "autonomy". The revealing of Christ's whole Body in history means meeting the "demonic powers of division which operate in history." (ibid.). We have previously noted that this point has also been made by Paul Tillich (Systematic Theology Vol. III, University of Chicago Press, 1964 p.214). This theme of reconciliation also brings us right back to Buber because,

although he expresses it differently, his life's work is about reconciling human beings one to another. We shall return to this theme shortly.

As we have previously observed Christ does his work in the Church through the Holy Spirit by the agency of his people, and the work is the same that he did on the cross, namely, reconciliation. The work of the Spirit is the personal and communitarian accommodation of this reconciliation and the same as the work of the Church.

Haroutunian states:

"The logical significance of the doctrine of the Spirit is in the Church's or the people's acknowledging their responsibility to act as a reconciling community.... It follows from the doctrine of the Spirit as presented that the Christian life in toto, which is traditionally credited to the Holy Spirit, is the work of the Church ... from the transaction or communion in the community " (Spirit in Richardson A. Ed. A Dictionary of Christian Theology, London, SCM, 1969 p.326).

Haroutunian gives a particular example of this in sanctification, so often regarded as an especial work of the Holy Spirit. He believes that the whole of a person's life, including his transactions with other people, is the field of operation of the Spirit. These transactions are a means of grace just as much as those traditionally understood "instruments". Other people enable the christian person to grow in holiness, or more correctly, participate in the holiness of God and expand that person's sphere of freedom:

"The Church acts not only as the means of grace but as the antidote to the lust for autonomy which resists the grace of God while lip service is paid to it " (op.cit. p.327).

The theme of this essay is that personal encounter, when seen in a pneumatological perspective, bringing out the existential aspect of the Church, is an important or key concept in ecclesiology. We have so far observed that this concept, which is far from being an alien one to non-Christian philosophers and thinkers, and is actually the hallmark of much of their thinking, is most clearly understood and elaborated in relation to the categories of personal existence, indeed makes little sense outside or apart from these categories. We have also observed that the personal is the true sphere of the work of the Holy Spirit in respect of humanity and the saving work of the Father accomplished through Jesus Christ. This is a point noted by Zizioulas (p.164):

"The paradox of the incorporation of the "many" into the "one" on which the eucharistic community, as we have seen, and perhaps the entire mystery of the Church are based, can only be understood and explained in the categories of personal existence".

He has previously elaborated the important distinction between the individual and the personal. He has done this in a review of the ancient world, and then, with the coming of Christianity he has reviewed the thinking of the Fathers concerning the Persons of the Trinity and the implications for the economy of salvation. We have also observed that Haroutunian believes that we can only satisfactorily understand the work of the Holy Spirit and therefore of the divine economy in personal terms, something we have noted in respect of many contemporary theologians from East and West. Zizioulas specifically mentions Martin Buber:

"The individual represents a category that presupposes separation and division " (ibid.) and he quotes him (I and Thou, 1958 p. 62):

"Individuality makes its appearance by its differentiation from other individualities."

He then maintains that, in the same section of I and Thou, Buber teaches that "the person represents a category that presupposes unity with other persons".

If, as Zizioulas asserts, the distinction between the individual and the personal has seldom been applied to ecclesiology, it follows that an elaboration of those personalist categories in relation to the personal encounter which forms such a fundamental constituent of the Church will also seldom have been essayed.

If this is the case it may be necessary to seek for further explication and a deepening of this notion in a somewhat tangential way, since it may be difficult to find direct and fully developed theological reflection on this perspective. Hans Urs von Balthasar has some interesting observations here (Martin Buber and Christianity - A Dialogue Between Israel and the Church, London, Harvill Press, 1961). He believes that Christianity has neglected this personal aspect, that which is quintessentially human. He asserts that Judaism represents a concern for the interhuman, expressed in its feeling for marriage and the family, and political and social realities. It is "this-wordly":

"Israel is the temporal image of the whole earthly and heavenly Kingdom of God, whose coming 'in mirrors and riddles' is the Church of Christ. The Church must fulfil both tasks simultaneously; it must embody the Word of God and the flesh of Jesus Christ more fully in the temporal order, and at the same time uproot and transplant the world as a whole into the Kingdom of Heaven and time into the dimension of eternity. One may, however, add that the second task acquired such

significance in Christianity - for it was after all the new element - that the first aspect of its mission has not infrequently been neglected and has sometimes been forgotten. It should also be added that when the young Church was uprooted from a concrete community it encountered innumerable forms of spiritualism and 'ex-carnation' in the philosophies of the Hellenistic world - the Church fixed its attention as a general rule on the beyond, and tended to conceive the period of probation in this world predominantly in individualistic terms, with the result that it gave barely a thought to the other aspect " (op.cit. pp.107 & 108).

Zizioulas certainly brings us back to face this other aspect, and also alludes to Martin Buber, who as previously noted, has influenced him considerably. Buber's life work has been both enunciating the categories of personal existence and seeing this as it relates to God's mission for Israel in terms of representing the divine in our personal existence. It will be demonstrated in this essay that Buber may be the one to illuminate that theological enquiry, and also, as a by-product of this enquiry, provide a bridge to the other proponents of a personalist analysis of existence.

Zizioulas and others place great emphasis on the Church as *koinonia*. It may be that Buber's insights into community and interpersonal relations can give greater focus to the concept of *koinonia*. For Buber the soul of community, and indeed of all personal relations is dialogue. With this concept we do not seem far away from Tillich's notion of mediation:

"He who is grasped by the Spirit can speak to one who needs his help in such a way that the Spirit can get hold of the other through him, and thus help becomes possible. For Spirit can heal only what is open to

Spirit " (Systematic Theology Vol. III, London, James Nisbet, 1964 p. 202).

The sphere of the work of the Holy Spirit in terms of the personal and existential aspects of existence have so far been emphasised.. It may be thought that this might have little in common with Buber. But Buber's works are imbued with a sense of the engagement of God in our world. Von Balthasar comments:

"...The world's suffering is not a matter of indifference to him, something of him, his *Schechina*, suffers with it. And that surely corresponds to what the Christian calls 'uncreated grace', the communication of Holy Spirit? For we read that we can 'grieve' the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4.30), 'quench' the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 5.19) and that he longs and groans for the day of salvation; 'the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered' (Rom. 8.26)."

CHAPTER II

BUBER AND PERSONAL ENCOUNTER

Early Writings

In the Introduction I referred to the illumination that Martin Buber's thinking on encounter sheds on the philosophical background to the theological notion of koinonia. It is worth noting that Buber has proved to be more of a prophet to Christian thinkers than to Jewish. C. Witton-Davies ("Martin Buber" in Vidler A. R. Ed. Theology Vol. LI, London, SPCK, 1948 pp.301-303) quotes one of Buber's friends (Simon E. Martin Buber's Weg Zwischen Gedanke und Tat, Tel Aviv, Yedioth, 1948):

"For decades Buber has been the chief representative of Judaism to the Christian world, the ambassador of Israel to the nations, albeit an ambassador not always accredited by his own people."

He was always more than a little suspect to Orthodox Jews because of his antihalakhic views and to the Reformed because of his antirationalistic views. Witton-Davies goes on to commend Buber (op.cit. p.303):

"At the same time he has a deep understanding of Christianity, based upon an acquaintance with Christian literature of all ages right back to the Greek New Testament itself and upon many intimate links with Christians in all parts of the world."

Having reviewed Zizioulas' thinking concerning koinonia, it will now be necessary to do the same for Buber's thinking. As was indicated then, his thinking has to be seen against the background of his life and in the context of his corpus of written work. Until recent years few authors have attempted a comprehensive treatment of Buber.

To some extent this has now been rectified by a number of authors and most recently by Lawrence J. Silberstein, (a professor of Jewish studies at Lehigh University) in Martin Buber's Social and Religious Thought (New York, New York University Press, 1989). The subtitle to this work is "Alienation and the Quest for Meaning" which Silberstein asserts was the principal organising idea for all Buber's work. It should be noted that alienation is itself a central theme of twentieth century philosophy and an intensely personal area of philosophical speculation, involving human relations with other human beings and with the world, and indeed with God.

"The 'facts' to which the term alienation refers are, objectively, different kinds of dissociation, break or rupture between human beings and their objects, whether the latter can be other persons, or the natural world, or their own creations in art, science and society " (Heinemann F. H. Existentialism and the Modern Predicament, New York, Harper and Bros., 1953 p.9).

In surveying Buber's thinking it is certainly not possible to remain wholly within what might be considered the philosophical framework because his intellectual corpus eludes easy categorisation:

"Subtly interweaving an analysis of concepts, existentialist phenomenology, psychology, social theory, cultural theory, theology and philosophical anthropology, Buber combines poetry, philosophy and religious discourse " (Silberstein p.2).

As indicated above the theme of alienation runs like a thread through Buber's writings:

"Informing all of his writings is the concern for the growing estrangement of the modern person from other persons, from the divine, and from his or her own authentic self. At the same time, the

concern with alienation, bridging his social and religious concerns, as well as his universal and his particular Jewish concerns, also helps to explain the diverse modes of discourse he employed " (op. cit. P.5).

Most studies ¹³ tend to focus on Buber as the philosopher of dialogue, without emphasising that his concern for dialogue grows out an awareness of the crisis of human existence:

"The primary word I - It is not of evil - as matter is not of evil. It is of evil - as matter is, which presumes to have the quality of present being. If man lets it have the mastery, the continually growing world of It overruns him and robs him of the reality of his own I, till the incubus over him and the ghost within him whisper to one another the confession of their non-salvation " (Buber M. I and Thou, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1987 P. 66).

From his earliest writing Buber portrayed the modern human being as cut off from the humanising forces necessary to fulfilment. This sense of the present age's sickness continued throughout his life in his writings, whether on Judaism, art, society, education or religion. Like many philosophers before him, Rousseau, Nietzsche and Marx, Buber believed that human beings have inherent capacities whose nature is necessary to growth and happiness. Buber treads a middle path between existentialist individualism and the communalism of the social thinkers. He developed a relational view of human existence, which he called the "interhuman" (Zwischenmenschliche). This theme, first formulated by Buber in 1906 and subsequently elaborated through

¹³ See Friedman M. Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue, New York, Harper Bros. 1960 who was the first to publish an extensive study of Buber in English; he based his work on the centrality of dialogue in Buber. This was later corrected to some extent in his more recent biography Martin Buber's Life and Work Vols. I, II & III, New York, Dutton 1981-83.

such concepts as I-Thou dialogue, synthesised elements from such diverse sources as European existentialism, Christian and Jewish theology and mysticism, Chinese thought and German social theory. While linking Buber to these various sources, it should be noted that his concerns are always to enlighten or assist twentieth century humankind in their crisis through the renewal of authentic communal forms. C Witton-Davies comments;

"Although he is frequently tempted to despair of politicians, he is realistic enough to admit that there must be an ordering of man's relationship in community, and it is for men of the Spirit to make their contribution towards the realisation of the right ordering of society "

("Martin Buber" in Vidler A. R. Ed. Theology Vol. LI, London, SPCK, 1948 pp.302).

This seems to be why he was attracted towards Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, because their writings are similarly non-systematic and aimed at elucidating the fundamental crisis in the life of the modern person through a critique of our accepted ways of thinking, but not a critique based on reason, logic, social usage or sense experience but on the total existential experience of the individual in interaction with the world. In the first analysis, Buber's concerns were metaphysical. His ultimate goal was not simply to change the way that people think but to alter the way that they live their lives:

"I say to him who listens to me: it is your experience. Recollect it, and what you cannot recollect, dare to attain it as experience" (Schilpp P. & Friedman M. Eds. The Philosophy of Martin Buber, La Salle, Ill., Open Court p.693).

For Buber philosophy was not fundamentally a precise science that uncovers the ultimate ontological foundations of reality or establishes the universal criteria of truth. In this he is very dissimilar to Heidegger and perhaps much more like Sartre. Perhaps one may be excused the speculation that Buber might very well have agreed with Sartre that other people are hell, but qualified the statement that this is only the case if all interhuman relationships are reduced to I -It relationships, to instrumental relationships. Buber's activities as a social critic are most clearly evident in the last three decades of his life, following his settling in Israel. He frequently questioned the social and political issues within Zionism and especially in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict.¹⁴

Buber's own early background and writings focus on Vienna at the turn of the century. His early thinking on the subject of alienation was influenced very considerably by what he perceived as the Jew's alienation from their own religion and culture. At this time Buber was influenced by Theodor Herzl, who declared that the hope for the successful integration of Jews into European society was futile. Along with other young intellectuals Buber was much influenced by the existentialists, although even at this early stage he felt their thinking to be too individualistic, which led him to study those who focused on social forms of alienation, especially Marx. This sceptical view of the contemporary situation of alienation was reinforced by the experience of the First World War which, Buber considered, shattered the existing rational beliefs and liberal values. Indeed at this time a major influence on him was Friedrich W. Nietzsche (1844-1900) who seemed to articulate this alienation, to offer a creative critique of European culture, a sense of ending combined with a call for a new beginning; a

¹⁴ For a sympathetic biographical comment upon this part of Buber's life as well as a more general appreciation see Wilson-Davies C. "Martin Buber" in Vidler A. R. Ed. *Theology Vol. LI*, London, SPCK, 1948 pp.310-303.

sentence of death of old values and ideals combined with the proclamation of a new morality. Silberstein comments:

"Proclaiming the death of God, Nietzsche announced the demise of Christian values on the one hand and of the ideals of European liberalism on the other. No longer could one find meaning or solace in the traditional religions or secular ideological and philosophical systems. Cut adrift from traditional sources of meaning and comfort, one could only turn inward in a desperate search to overcome isolation and alienation. Unable to bear the sense of isolation and loneliness that such a vision entailed, the modern individual seeks refuge and comfort in all kinds of intellectual and ideological systems. However, these systems only exacerbate our alienated existence. Only by confronting the truth of our situation can we reach the authentic sources of our own being and recover our authentic selves " (Silberstein p.25).

By explicitly expressing what most people sought to suppress, namely a lack of any spiritual reference point in the modern world, Nietzsche led his readers to the brink of nihilism:

"Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we hear nothing as yet of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him " (The Gay Science, New York, Random House, 1974. pp. 25 & 181).

Buber was excited by Nietzsche's critique. Nietzsche replaced the static God with a dynamic becoming God. He had restored the human being to the position of active participant in the ongoing process of creation:

"Over and against the God of the world's beginning he set up a formidable adversary, the becoming God to whose development we can contribute, the envisaged product of future evolutions" (Buber M, "Nietzsche und die lebenswete" in Schoeder G. The Hebrew Humanism of Martin Buber, Detroit, Wayne State University, 1973 p.34).

However, in spite of the considerable influence of Nietzsche, Buber was deeply convinced of life's ultimate meaningfulness and gradually moved away from his precursor. Certain of Nietzsche's ideas did remain with him: first, the obligation to actualise oneself, secondly, the mistrust of alienating intellectual and institutional structures and thirdly, the pursuit of an alternative to relationships built on power.

Although it was to be several years before his social concerns became dominant, from the outset his concern for individual self-actualisation was balanced by a deep-seated yearning for community. It was at this time that Buber turned to the German social theorists - Karl Marx, Ferdinand Tönnies, Georg Simmel and Max Weber - as he considered alienation as a social phenomenon. In a speech in 1899 to Neue Gemeinschaft, a group seeking alternative communal forms he proclaims:

"All life emerges out of community and strives for community.
Community is the well spring, the source of life. " Ed. Flohr P. R. &
Susser B. "Alte und Neue Gemeinschaft" in Association of Jewish Studies Review I, 1976 pp. 50-56)

It was at this time that Buber began to believe that the individual person could overcome alienation in the context of genuine community. Echoing these social theorists, Buber denounced the profit-orientated, utilitarian values of Western society as the major obstacle to genuine community. It is interesting to note in passing that at this time, circa 1909, Buber made Jakob Boehme the primary subject of his doctoral thesis. Indeed Buber also studied the Christian mystics such as Nicholas of Cusa, Angelus Silesius and Meister Eckhart. Buber's most comprehensive statement on the nature of mysticism is found in his introduction to his anthology Ecstatic Confessions, (New York, Harper & Row, 1985). He found in these accounts profound spiritual experiences unlike anything that he had thus far found in Judaism. Of particular interest to Buber was the way in which Boehme and Nicholas of Cusa showed the development of the human person from submersion in the universe's organic unity and towards emergence as a unique and separate being. Buber found in Boehme a dynamic conception of the universe where all beings are knit together by the drives of power and love. Boehme taught that human beings have an active role in creation, rather similarly to Nietzsche, through the will to power. But, unlike Nietzsche, he balanced this with the drive for love, which was the link with God. This was an important and significant alternative to Nietzsche, and the implication of which Buber fully absorbed. Buber was also influenced by Boehme's view that every created being possesses the will and capacity to actualise its own potential, and in so doing contribute to the actualisation of God. Buber bypassed Boehme's theology, and emphasised instead his insights into the existentialist human condition.¹⁵

¹⁵ Silberstein has an interesting footnote here (Silberstein p.275 n.69): "In the light of Buber's later social orientation it is interesting to note that at this early stage, he favoured Boehme's mystical orientation over Feuerbach's social orientation." See Feuerbach L. The Essence of Christianity, (London, Kegan Paul, 1893) pp.91-100, where Feuerbach specifically argues against Boehme's mystical orientation: (op.cit. p.93)

Hasidism and Renewal

The theme of community was further elaborated in the years following 1909 as Buber became interested in Hasidism. It may not at first sight seem that this line of study had any connection with what had gone before, indeed to many of Buber's Jewish contemporaries his interest was curious and atavistic. However Silberstein describes Buber's whole approach as one of "creative misreading" of the Hasidic texts (Silberstein p. 44). Buber transformed Hasidism from an other-worldly ultra-orthodoxy into a humanistic religious teaching. In a sense Buber used Hasidism as a vehicle for his form of religious existentialism. Behind his call to a genuine renewal of religious life and authentic existence we can hear the voice of Kierkegaard and even Nietzsche. He taught that true loving i.e. authentic existence, consists essentially of living with others in community. One of the major myths of Hasidism is that of the broken vessels, propounded by the sixteenth century rabbi and Kabbalist Isaac Luria. Luria and his disciples formulated a radical interpretation of biblical texts combining motifs of cosmic alienation, catastrophe and messianic redemption. To

"The doctrine of Nature in God is borrowed from Jacob Boehme ... Jacob Boehme has a profoundly religious mind ... But at the same time, the significance which has been given to Nature in modern times - by the study of natural science, by Spinozism, materialism, empiricism - has taken possession of his religious sentiment." It does not seem without significance that the following sentence can be found in the same passage (op.cit. p.92):

"Where there is no thou, there is no I; but the distinction between I and Thou, the fundamental condition of all personality, of all consciousness, is only real, living, ardent, when felt as the distinction between man and woman." It does not seem too fanciful to suggest that it may have been this passage which set Buber on the train of thought which led to I & Thou, particularly since Buber specifically instances marriage as a prime example of an I-Thou relationship. (I & Thou, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1987 p.65) It is in the context of marriage and sexual relations that Feuerbach is writing. Silberstein continues (ibid.):

"Feuerbach depicted the divine as emerging out of the relations between individuals, between the I and Thou, Buber still preferred Boehme's concept of the underlying unity of creation. Although, in his later writings, Buber continued to emphasise a mystical predilection for unity and wholeness, the themes of community and inter-human relation became dominant, as we shall observe later."

Luria and his followers, creation began with the self contraction of God. The vessels into which the divine rays poured broke and the divine sparks were scattered. Thus, the primordial unity of God was shattered and the universe was plunged into a condition of cosmic alienation, with God fragmented and separated from his or her own essential being. (See Scholem G. Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, New York, Schocken, 1971, Lecture 7; & Kabbalah, New York, Meridian Books, 1978 pp. 128-144.)

The possibility of redemption was built into the Lurianic system through the process of tikkun, or repairing. By performing the commandments with the proper devotional attitude, Hasidism reunited the divine sparks, while the commandments became a means to an end. This leads to devekut, the cleaving of the person to God, which is the ultimate goal, the experience of divine encounter.

Both Lurianic Kabbalah and Hasidism viewed the individual person as actively engaged in the ongoing process of creation. Buber found an emphasis on human creativity that had so appealed to him in the teachings of Nietzsche and the Christian mystics.

Just as Hasidism had transformed Kabbalah into a new Jewish ethos, Buber transformed Hasidism into an humanistic religious teaching. Buber broadened the Hasidic conception of action from simply the commandments to include any action performed in the proper spirit. Echoing Kierkegaard, he asserted that the "how" of an action, the spirit in which it was performed, rather than the "what", the content, was decisive. (See Kierkegaard S. Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Princeton N.J., University Press, 1946 pp.181-182) Buber transformed Hasidism into a theory of universal human spirituality, whereby the entire range of one's activity has the potential

for redemptive action - all beings and objects that one encounters in one's daily life constitute paths to the divine.

Moving well beyond the limits of rabbinic Judaism, Buber advocated a religious existentialism that conflicted with the premises of traditional Judaism. (See Scholem G. The Messianic Idea in Judaism, New York, Schocken, 1971 pp.228-250). To Buber, the Lurianic myths also presuppose a primal condition of organic connectedness and anything that impedes this engenders alienation. Buber thus transformed the Lurianic myth from a theological vision of divine self-alienation to an existential vision of human alienation in which persons are separated from one another, from nature and from the divine. Hasidism, in Buber's view, taught that human alienation could be overcome through acts of love and through communal existence, providing a hope of redemption missing from Nietzsche. And Silberstein has this telling comment to make (Silberstein p.51):

"Coming to Hasidism as a passionate reader in search of a way out of the abyss of nihilism, Buber found a way out of the morass of modern alienation. In contrast to Nietzsche's naturalistic philosophy, Buber viewed reality through the lens of religious faith: 'It seemed clear enough to me that I was concerned from first to last with restoring immediacy to the relation between man and God, with helping to end 'the eclipse of God' ' (Buber M. The Eclipse of God, New York, Harper & Bros., 1952 p.224)."

In Buber's reinterpreted Hasidism we observe his belief that alienation from the divine is the key to the modern person's condition, affecting and indeed being causally connected with his alienation from himself and others.

It is important to take serious note of Silberstein's comments, above, that Buber adopted an approach to the Kabbalistic texts which was a "creative misreading". It is perfectly possible to interpret the myth of the broken vessels in a monistic sense, which clearly Buber does not do. Space does not permit a detailed look at the historical genesis of Kabbalism, but it does not seem unlikely that its esoteric origins connect it with philosophical world views, like the Greek and Gnostic, which had a monistic perspective. If interpreted in a strictly monistic sense, this interpretation would run contrary to Buber's whole contention that human beings have significance and meaning as persons, and not just as parts of the whole. As persons they have to work at relating to others; as separate beings they have to strive to relate. In a monistic perspective the real ontological necessity of this is removed.

In passing it should be noted that Buber's reinterpretation of Hasidism along humanistic lines was challenged from traditional Jewish quarters. This attack was spearheaded by Gershom Scholem, the acknowledged dean of scholars of Kabbalah. In a sense the attack was misplaced. Scholem was imbued with the spirit of nineteenth century objectivistic historical scholarship, the very approach which Buber disavowed:

"The other, and essentially different, way of restoring a great buried heritage of faith to the light is to recapture a sense of the power that once gave it the capacity to take hold of and vitalise the life of diverse classes of people. Such an approach derives from the desire to convey to our own time the force of a former life of faith to help our age renew its ruptured bond with the absolute. The scholar, bent upon unearthing a forgotten or misunderstood body of teaching, cannot accomplish this renewal even if he succeeds in establishing a new interpretation" (Buber

M. "Interpreting Hasidism" in Commentary 36. No. 3. Sept. 1963. pp. 218-25).

Buber's turning to myth, his Dionysian vision, was a basic component of his revisionistic orientation. The Dionysic culture is in contrast to the Apollonian rationally-structured culture.

Buber's concern at this time was revising Judaism. In this he was much influenced by Kierkegaard in his attitude to Church institutions. Buber seems to have turned to Kierkegaard in this context and away from Nietzsche with his antireligious tenor. But like Nietzsche, Kierkegaard believed that in the modern age, the concrete, feeling, existing individual had been swallowed by the crowd. In contrast to Nietzsche, who sought to liberate the individual person from the alienating effects of religion, Kierkegaard believed that genuine religious faith offered the only hope for overcoming alienation. But to Kierkegaard Christianity meant neither historical Christianity nor Christianity as currently lived. He distinguished between official establishment Christianity and authentic, subjective, existential Christianity. He believed that the authentic Christian must eschew objective systems and live in the light of his or her freedom. This was the true nature of faith:

"Without risk, there is no faith. Faith is precisely the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual's inwardness and objective uncertainty. If I am capable of grasping God objectively, I do not believe, but precisely because I cannot do this, I must believe" (Kierkegaard S. Concluding Unscientific Postscript Princeton. N.J., Princeton University Press, 1941, p. 182).

Buber's revisionist stance towards Judaism parallels the revisionist stance adopted by Kierkegaard toward official Christianity. Buber's emphasis on the existential experience of the Jew and his critique of the objectified, institutionalised forms of Jewish life were the distinctive components of his revisioning of Judaism and paralleled Kierkegaard's distinction between establishment Christianity and authentic, subjective and existential Christianity.

After the First World War Buber's intellectual efforts began to reach out to a wider audience, as his method of discourse moved away from the Jewish idiom of Hasidism towards the more philosophical, as he came to see his general line of thinking had great relevance to all communities and people and not just the Jewish.

It should be noted here that Buber's idea of philosophical discourse differs significantly from the dominant tradition of Western systematic philosophy. Buber has no system, his purpose is to testify to experience: his concern is pragmatic rather than theoretical. Moreover, his philosophical style resembles poetic meditation rather than rational, critical discourse. Buber's method rejects the claims of objectivism,, in line with his existentialist mentors: he thus rejects all essentialist claims. He questions the privileged status conventionally accorded to the descriptions of human beings offered by natural sciences. His philosophy entails a distrust of the notion that man's essence is to be the knower of essences, rather he endorses our 'existentialist' intuition that redescribing ourselves is the most important thing we can do. In I and Thou, and in his subsequent philosophical discussions, Buber undertook to formulate an alternative view of persons, language and society that would make possible nonalienating relationships between persons, persons and nature, and persons and God. His ultimate

goal was to change ways of thinking in order to change ways of living. Silberstein summarises this:

"Buber criticised the modern objectivistic discursive framework, in which persons, viewed as separate individuals who relate to the world and other persons, are viewed as separate individuals who relate to the world and other persons as subject to object. This discourse, which privileges detachment, objectification, and rational analysis, is grounded in and simultaneously legitimates modes of social relationship that impede human growth and actualisation. By awakening his readers to the categories that shape our discourse and social relations, Buber endeavoured to point a way beyond the perennial alienation that characterises modern life" (Silberstein p.106).

Here again we see the concern with alienation and the desire to overcome it by rethinking the human enterprise by combining insights from existential philosophy and social theory to formulate a dynamic conception of the human being. Utilising a poetic discourse, he deconstructed the conventional concepts used to describe human existence and formulated new ones in an effort "to take us out of our old selves by the power of strangeness, to aid us in becoming new human beings" (Rorty R. Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, Princeton N J, Princeton University Press, 1979 p.360).

In 1913 Buber published Hasidic Dialogues on Realisation (Friedman M. Ed. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964). It is important to see this work in the context in which Buber undertook it, not so much in the context of Western systematic philosophy, but in the context of the unmasking of the basic alienating forms of social life and the providing of alternative ways of thinking about them. In this work he

described the city, and the stranger arriving within it, as a symbol of alienation, the plight of the modern individual. Lost in the city, the person experiences anxiety:

"Because he longs for security, he needs, above all else this one thing:
to know his way about. What sort of city is this? Where does this street
lead? How do I get out of this sinister place? To know one's way about,
this is the key to salvation and health, to security itself " (op cit. p.89).

Impelled by this anxiety, the modern person grasps at the security offered by the scientific, rational worldview. But, as Nietzsche had recognised, the effort proves to be empty and without meaning. Buber goes on to assert that the root cause of alienation is the instrumentalist ethos, where productivity is the measure of human worth. Daniel was Buber's first effort at reformulating categories through which to articulate his critique of alienation. Referring to the conventional goal-directed mode of consciousness and life as 'orientation', Buber introduced an alternative mode, 'actualisation'. The actualising person immerses himself or herself directly in pure life experience (Erlebnis). Another feature of Buber at this period is that he was also moving away from his mystical orientation, in terms of the celebration of solitude and individual meditation, and towards the achievement of genuine life through the immediacy of human relationships. In Daniel, for the first time he introduced the concept of dialogue that was to become central in his later thought. Here, for the first time, he expressed the view that to attain actualisation a person requires a "Thou". Only to another Thou can we pour out our anxiety and restlessness in the face of the abyss "between thing and thing, between image and being, between the world and me " (op. cit. p. 86).

These categories were the forerunners of those that Buber was later to formulate in I and Thou. Although Daniel is usually identified as reflecting the mystical period in Buber's life, a careful reading makes it clear that by the time he wrote it Buber had already begun to move away from his mystical orientation. In contrast to the mystic's celebration of solitude and individual meditation, Buber insisted that genuine life is only achieved through the immediacy of human relationships as expressed in "life of community and of human fellowship; for in genuine community as in genuine solitude, it is immediacy which makes it possible to live the actualising as real" (Daniel, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964 p. 78). The existential concern with the concrete and growing emphasis on relationship are indicative of the new direction Buber was taking. Hans Urs von Balthasar makes a comment upon this stage in Buber's thinking (Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961 p.42):

"Buber subsequently toned down the mystical and monistic vitalism of his early formulae when he adopted a form of personalism which is much closer to biblical realism ... which discards the exaggerations of his youth and explicitly reject the fluid unification which blurs the difference between God and creature."

In the experiences of the First World War, Buber found only confirmation of the line of his thinking. The breakdown of organic communal forms was accompanied by an intensification of human solitude and insecurity. He came to see that it was essential to the spiritual well-being of humanity to restore the possibility of direct, unmediated relationships between persons, for moreover, it is only in the meeting of person with person that we can find the meeting of persons with God. God is to be sought not in moments of individual ecstasy, but wherever people relate to one another in love and

concern. It was at this point that he broke company with Kierkegaard. Rather than put all the emphasis on personal experiences and faith over religious institutions he now believed that the divine - human encounter could only be fully actualised in the context of relations with other persons. He stated at this time that modern social institutions, including the state and the means of production, have drained the blood out of communal life and frozen human relationships. Buber's starting point was the view advocated by Ferdinand Tönnies that the fundamental problem of modern life is the displacement of organic, voluntary communities by depersonalised, mechanical, technologically-orientated social structures. But he also acknowledged that a return to premodern social forms is impossible and he advocated a new, organic model of community. The basis of this new form of community was to be the belief in the total connectedness and relatedness of all beings, an idea derived from the teachings of Boehme and Hasidism. This cosmic connectedness was to find its social actualisation through helping relationships. These were first mentioned in Legends of the Baal Shem (New York, Schocken, 1969) - relationships that help us to grow in self-discovery and self-awareness and to become creators, relationships by which we help others to draw out (zu erziehen) and actualise their own innate predispositions.¹⁶

Authentic political forms would arise out of this from relationships formed in the non-political spheres, whereas Landauer located the starting point of this in the transformation of the individual, Buber located it in the realm of human relationships. Whereas, human relationships, particularly in capitalist societies, are dominated by the

¹⁶ In this thinking Buber was much influenced by his friend Gustav Landauer, who taught that genuine community presupposes shared ownership of land; shared labour; mutual aid and support, material as well as spiritual; and spiritual leadership. In the new form of social organisation, local co-operative communities would serve as the basic cells of a commonwealth of communities. See: Lunn E. Prophet of Community: The Romantic Socialism of Gustav Landauer, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1973.

objectivist, goal-orientated, utilitarian mode of relation. Buber's goal was to formulate an alternative discourse and an alternative mode of relating to others that was non-competitive, noncontrolling, nonpurposeful and nonutilitarian.

I and Thou

An important step towards the goal of an alternative mode of relating was the formulation, in 1922, of the distinction between relating to others as 'Thous' and 'Its', (in the essay "The Task", 1922 see A Believing Humanism - My Testament 1902-1965, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1967 p.99). In opposition to the primal evil of modern society, there are brief moments in which we can hear the message, "Not your It, but your Thou is what is essential, though not surveyable" (op cit. p. 100). In contrast to the utilizable It, the Thou offers possibilities for opening up persons one to another, for beholding one another, and realising one another. In the subsequent discussion it is important to note that many studies of Buber have focused on the theological or ontological dimensions of his thought to the neglect of his social concerns.

As we have noted above Buber taught that the alienated condition was rooted in prevailing modes of discourse and social relationships. To this problem Buber applied what can be described as a deconstructive strategy. This is essential to the understanding of I and Thou:

"Concepts, the grandiose instruments of human orientation, must repeatedly be clarified " (Rome B. & Rome S. Eds. Philosophical Interrogations, New York, Harper & Row, 1970 p.17)

The close analysis and criticism of concepts was the basic component of Buber's philosophical discourse. Buber rejected the notion that rational conceptual frameworks give us access to concrete reality. They must be tested against existential experience:

"Concepts become problematic because they do not show a concrete context that can be controlled. Every abstraction must stand the test of being related to a concrete reality without which it has no meaning"

(Buber M. A Believing Humanism - My Testament 1902-1965, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1967 p.153).

In I and Thou the basic target for Buber's critique is the common-sense concept of experience (Erfahrung) that prevails in Western society; and the concepts of person and community that derive from it. The basic tendency is to view the world around us, including our social world, as objects to be manipulated and exploited for our own purposes. To experience the world, or to experience other persons, we assume the stance of subjects standing over and against objects.

The common sense every day world was designated by Buber as the "It" world. Our relationship to it is instrumental and is rooted in our need to possess, control and dominate. In speaking the basic word I-It, we stand back from the world, view it objectively, break it down into components, and analyse it. The paradigm of the I-It mode is objectivistic, scientific thought. Buber does not regard this mode as bad or evil, indeed it is essential to material progress. But, in modern society, the I-It mode, appropriate to science, commerce and industry, has expanded to dominate all aspects of our lives. We relate to others in the same way we relate to objects and things, and moreover, we equate experience in general with the I-It mode. One of Buber's basic

concerns in I and Thou and subsequent philosophical discussions was to unmask the inadequacy of this mode of discourse and relation for human life:

"The life of human beings is not passed in the sphere of transitive verbs alone. I does not exist in virtue of activities alone which have some thing for their object. I perceive something. I am sensible of something. I imagine something. The life of human beings does not consist of all this and the like alone" (Buber M. I and Thou, Edinburgh, T & T Clark. 1987. p. 16).

Although we take this common-sense view of the world of I-It as given, there is another way of being-in-the-world; another mode of relating. Or put another way we may say that we acknowledge the "thereness" of being-with-others. Buber called this alternative mode of being relation (Beziehung) and I-Thou.¹⁷

It is important to note here what Buber actually means because he has been misunderstood frequently. The real determinant of the 'primary word' is not the object which is over against a person but the way in which a person relates himself or herself to that object. B. J. Fair comments²⁰⁵("Martin Buber and some theologians of Encounter" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 21, Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd, 1968 p.29 & 30):

"Quite apart from any further considerations, the fact that Buber speaks of an I-Thou relation with things is sufficient to show that both admirers and critics have radically misunderstood Buber's intention when they equate 'Thou' with 'Person'. ..."

¹⁷ The German word Du is best rendered in modern English by You rather than Thou - I retain Thou as this is the way the work I and Thou is best known in English.

The misunderstanding here is obviously caused by Buber's use of the phrase 'I and Thou'. This normally refers to a personal relation ... Yet Buber himself says enough to warn us that this is the wrong approach. In the very first sentence of *I and Thou* he speaks of man's attitude towards the world. His entire discussion of the I-Thou attitude made with the whole being, in contrast to the partial response of I-It, should tell us that 'Thou' is what Diamond calls a 'posture' taken towards the world, a posture which need not be expressed in the spoken word (Diamond M. L. Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist, 1960, p. 20 & Ch. 2). Of the relation with intelligible forms Buber is explicit:

"We speak the primary word with our being, though we cannot utter
Thou with our lips." (I and Thou p.6).

A further reason for not taking Buber's 'Thou' as equivalent to person is that the word 'Thou' stands for a relation, not for one of the members of the relation.

Unlike experience, the I-It mode of relating, relation is nonpurposeful, non-possessive and non-utilitarian. When we stand in relation to something we no longer perceive it as an object apart from ourselves, to be used or manipulated to our own ends:

"When Thou is spoken, the speaker has no thing for his object. For where there is a thing there is another thing. Every It is bounded by others. It exists only through being bounded by others. But when Thou is spoken, there is no thing. Thou has no bounds. When Thou is spoken, the speaker has no thing; he has indeed nothing. But he takes his stand in relation " (op. cit. p. 17).

Unlike the I-It mode, which is mediated through concepts and categories, relation is immediate and direct:

"The relation to the Thou is direct. No system of ideas, no foreknowledge, and no fancy intervene between I and Thou no aim, no lust, and no anticipation intervene between I and Thou." (op. cit. p. 25).

As his social concerns become more prominent, the inadequacy of his previous intellectual frameworks of Lebensphilosophie and mysticism became clear. He was also convinced that the modern emphasis on separation and isolation prevent us from grasping the inherently relational nature of life. The category of Erlebnis, grounded in the private experience of the individual, could not accommodate the social nature of human life. As a result, we define our needs in terms of individual satisfaction, which definition renders all meaning psychological. "Psychologism", as Buber referred to this, encourages us to distance ourselves from others and view them in terms of our own needs and satisfactions, thus reinforcing the I-It mode in relation to other persons. Buber believed that the individual "healing" of which psychologists speak can only be achieved by the recognition that the sickness of the individual is a function of the sickness that permeates our broken relationships with others.

Given the above it follows that an effective analysis of human relationships presupposes an adequate concept of the human being. Buber recognised that Kant had rightly stated that the study of the person constitutes the central task of modern philosophy but he also asserted that Kant failed to shed light on the meaning of human existence. He believed that, although they had erred in significant ways Kierkegaard and Nietzsche were on the right path in emphasising direct, subjective experience and questioning objectivistic thought. Silberstein comments:

"In the wake of the First World War, philosophers had increasingly turned their attention to the problematic nature of human existence. Men like Husserl, Heidegger and Scheler had developed a new analysis of the anthropological condition. Their philosophising was not an abstract, academic endeavour but an undertaking of the most urgent and practical consequences " (Silberstein 1989 p.123).

In contrast to the objectivistic mode of thinking derived from the Greeks, the Bible, according to Buber, provides a relational mode of knowing that contrasts with the abstract, subject-object mode of knowing that prevails in the West. The verb 'to know' in Hebrew presupposes direct relation, as in "Adam knew his wife Eve": "... the relationship of being to being is meant in which the real knowing of I and Thou takes place" (Buber M. A Believing Humanism - My Testament 1902-65, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1967 p.130).

Buber insisted that neither the individual nor the group is the proper starting point for understanding the human situation. The correct starting point is the relation of one person to another and of the individual to the community. One of Buber's primary objectives was to develop an adequate conception of human existence.¹⁸ To achieve

¹⁸ In formulating this anthropology he was influenced by Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Feuerbach. Feuerbach, criticising the idealistic metaphysics of Hegel, had made a decisive contribution. Eschewing theological concepts, he had based his analysis solely on the fundamental needs of the living person. But, according to Buber, he had neglected the realm of the interhuman, while Marx neglected the interhuman in favour of the collective. (See Buber M. Paths in Utopia, Boston, Beacon Press, 1949 pp. 80-98; also Pointing the Way - Collected Essays, New York, Harper, 1957 pp.192-207)

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche had understood self-reflection as the starting point for an enquiry into the meaning of human existence. Buber believed that Kierkegaard had taken religious categories such as sin and guilt, and conditions like fear, despair and decision, and "lifted them beyond the sphere of purely psychological consideration ... and looked at them as links in an existential process, in an ontic connection with the absolute, as elements of an existence 'before God'" (Buber M. Between Man and Man, New York, Macmillan, 1965 p. 162-63).

Buber criticised Kierkegaard on two counts:

- 1) He had introduced theological concepts into the anthropological discussion.
- 2) His individualistic conception of the person was inadequate.

this goal, he employed a form of existential phenomenology, delving into deep levels of human experience. But unlike the existentialists, Buber's starting point was not the isolated individual but the individual in relation to other persons. Buber, like Nietzsche, held a dynamic conception of person, in a continual state of becoming. However, in contrast to Nietzsche, Buber translated this dynamic conception into a relational, existential philosophy of human existence that emphasized the ultimate meaningfulness and sacredness of life. We are as we relate; how we do so is a function of the attitude we assume; that attitude is shaped by the basic words we speak:

"There is no I taken in itself, but only the I of the primary word I-Thou and the I of the primary word I-It. When a man says "I" he refers to the one or the other of these. The I to which he refers is present when he says "I"" (Buber M. I and Thou, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1987 p. 16).

In Buber's anthropology, human beings are not seen as isolated, independent entities, separate from one another and the world. To speak of a person is to speak of his relation to something or someone. To speak of a person is to speak of modes of relation to the world of nature and other persons.

Kierkegaard's refusal to marry his fiancée, Regina Olsen, was, in Buber's view, a consequence of his erroneous conception of religion and the person. Believing that assuming responsibility for another person would limit his capacity to respond to God, Kierkegaard understood his act of renunciation to be a religious act. To Buber this contradicted the teaching of Jesus, who had taught that relationships to others bridge the abyss separating the human and the divine. Buber insisted that "God wants us to come to him by means of the Reginas he has created and not by the renunciation of them" (Between Man and Man, New York, Macmillan, 1965 p.52).

Buber believed that Nietzsche had made a distinctive contribution to our understanding of the human condition in focusing on the problematic nature of human existence. Buber found two fundamental problems in Nietzsche's views:

- 1) He was so concerned with the human rootedness in the animal world that he neglected the unique quality of human culture.
- 2) He failed to understand the social nature of human existence, perpetuating the fundamental error of Western philosophy.

Buber taught that speech both engenders and expresses a mode of relation although he did not restrict speech to spoken words because speech, attitude and intention are organically related. So to speak about a world grounded in relation, we require an alternative language form. Rather than speak of I, You and It, which would reinforce an atomistic view, Buber spoke of the basic forms of relation using the word pairs I-Thou and I-It. Individual words incorrectly convey a world of separation and fragmentation in which beings are independent of one another. The idea that language generates or constitutes the framework through which we see and experience reality has been developed by philosophers such as Wittgenstein, J. L. Austin and Norman Malcolm. Unlike individual words, word pairs convey relation.¹⁹

One of the ways in which Buber differentiated the I of experience from the I of relation is through the category of presentness. In an I-It experience, neither I nor the other can be fully present because I objectify that which stands over and against me. I thereby reduce its fullness, relating only to a particular dimension or aspect of the other. At the same time, I hold back a part of myself. When I stand in relation, however, I am fully present, withholding nothing of myself and confronting the other as a whole:

"The primary word I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being "

(op. cit. p. 15).

He then went on to distinguish further the two basic modes of being human, distinguishing between person as one who stands in relation and ego as one who is

¹⁹ Buber has been criticised for his polar approach (see Kaufmann W. "Buber's Failures and Triumph" in Bloch J. & Gordon H. Eds. Martin Buber: A Centenary Volume, New York, Ktav, 1984) insisting that it oversimplified the complexities of human relationships. Kaufmann and Rothenburg (see Rothenburg A. The Emerging Goddess: The Creative Process in Art, Science and Other Fields, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1979) both suggest that Buber's thinking in I and Thou is open to the charge of Romanticism and Manicheanism, but this would seem to be increasingly absent from Buber's later discussions of dialogical relations.

conscious of himself or herself as the subject of an action or experience. These are ideal types, but each person gravitates towards one or other of these poles:

"The stronger the I of the primary word I-Thou is in the twofold I, the more personal is the man. According to what he means, when he says I - it can be decided where a man belongs and where his way leads. The word I is the true shibboleth of mankind " (op. cit. p. 88).

Buber's philosophical anthropology rested upon the assumption that a longing for relation is innate in all people. In the womb, the child exists in a state of pure relation and bodily reciprocity. Primitive persons first experience the world in an I-Thou mode. Buber agreed with Kant that the human being grasps reality through innate forms and categories. For Buber the primary mode of human experience is the mode of relationship rather than thought, consciousness, or ideas such as space, time or causality:

"In the beginning is relation - as category of being, readiness, grasping form, mould for the soul; it is the a priori, the inborn Thou " (op. cit. p. 43).

Buber subsequently regretted the similarity of his phraseology to the opening verses of Genesis and St John's Gospel, because it was not his intention to assert the temporal priority of relation, but to give priority to the steps necessary to human becoming. And he believed that the category of relation would not be unknown to his readers. He was merely helping them recover their forgotten existential roots. It should be emphasised that the I-Thou relation is not a state of being that once achieved endures, because every I-Thou relation necessarily reverts to an I-It. But, although I-It relationships are inevitable, I-Thou relations are essential for actualising our humanity:

"And in all the seriousness of truth, hear this: without It man cannot live. But he who lives with It alone is not a man " (op. cit. p. 52).

And Silberstein comments (Silberstein 1989 p.132):

"Life, as Buber understood it, is a process in which we continually move towards or away from the actualisation of our innate drive to relation. Through the ways in which we relate, to others, our basic human capacity is either actualised or deactualized. Each time we enter into relation, the innate You is actualised. By entering into relation, I become a complete person, an I."

Just as we require others to actualise our potential, the other requires us. Thus all truly human living is an existential encounter. Buber instances certain historical characters who epitomise the relational mode of existence: Socrates, Goethe and Jesus.

Of the latter he says:

" how powerful, even to being overpowering, and how legitimate, even to being self-evident, is the saying of I by Jesus! For it is the I of unconditioned relation in which the man calls his Thou Father in such a way that he himself is simply Son, and nothing else but Son " (I and Thou, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clarke, 1987 p.90).

An I-Thou relation cannot be planned and depends upon what Buber describes as a grace. Yet, while one can never be certain of entering into an I-Thou relation, the stance one assumes does play a role. While the I-Thou relation cannot be sought out or planned in advance, one can assume a stance of openness and readiness:

"The Thou meets me through grace - it is not found by seeking. But my speaking of the primary word to it is an act of my being, is indeed

the act of my being. The Thou meets me. But I step into direct relation with it. Hence the relation means being chosen and choosing, suffering and action in one " (op. cit. p.24).

It is only by means of encounters that I can actualise my own humanity. Accordingly, genuine existence begins with encounters. To the extent that we live in isolation, devoid of encounters, we forfeit the opportunity to actualise our humanness. The category of relation presupposes the same sense of organic relation to nature that Buber had earlier found in Boehme and St Francis. In 1901, in his dissertation he emphasised the ecstatic, mystical element, but later emphasised the existential individuation of the person. In his writings on Hasidism, Buber insisted that the liberation of the spark did not result in the annihilation of the concrete, individual life of each being, as some Hasidic sources would appear to claim. (See Hasidism and Modern Man, New York, Horizon, 1958 pp.111-115)

Relation is prior to all categories and presupposes reciprocity. But Buber was careful to distinguish between reciprocity and mutuality. Any I-Thou relation is reciprocal insofar as each partner experiences the encounter in the same way, with each standing in the same relation to the other. This would be true of relating to nature, even if the "object" lacks consciousness. Mutuality, however, is therefore limited to human encounters, a more limited situation in which each partner experiences the encounter in the same way, with each standing in the same relation to the other.

In I and Thou we observe that Buber transposed the Hasidic view of reality into philosophical terms. The Hasidic idea that divine sparks dwell in each living thing presupposes the organic reality of all things and the priority of relation. According to Buber, the Hasidic idea of the penetration of all spheres by the divine also implies the

redemptive power of everyday human actions. The emphasis is upon the redemptive possibilities already existing in our existential situation. Rather than accommodate oneself to the alienating conditions of the society in which we live, Buber believed that we must strive to combat this alienation through our relation to others. The I-Thou relation is based not on power as conventionally understood, nor on practical benefit, nor on satisfaction of needs. All thought of deriving benefit from the relationship is transcended. Rather than improve my own ideas, beliefs and values, I accept and confirm you. To the extent that I influence you, I do so not by imposing myself on you but by helping to draw out your own unique qualities.

From Relation to Dialogue

In the decades following the publication of I and Thou, Buber continually revised his concepts in an effort to make his ideas more accessible and useful to ordinary people in order to overcome their alienation. Silberstein asserts (p.305, footnote 1) that authors such as Kaufmann do a disservice to Buber because their critique begins and ends with I and Thou. Four problems arose in this regard: first, it was alleged that I and Thou offered little practical guidance to people. Yet, according to Buber, it is precisely in the everyday world of interhuman relations that a person actualises himself or herself. I and Thou seemed to offer little practical guidance about what to do in the course of such encounters. Secondly Buber's polar way of thinking was criticised. Each pole appears to be absolute, with no room for gradations. This sharp dichotomy does not correspond to the complex actualities of human relationships. Relationships seem to embody I-Thou or I-It in varying degrees. Thirdly it was asked how one could have a mutual relationship with non-humans. As Buber himself acknowledged, there might be

an I-Thou relation without full mutuality. The fact of the matter is that for Buber the I-Thou relation ranges over everything we meet. In his own words:

"The spheres in which the world of relation arises are these ... our life with nature ... our life with men ... our life with intelligible forms " (I & Thou, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clarke, 1987 p.18).

Fourthly I and Thou was criticised for being too abstract, not related to concrete sociohistorical situations. As Buber again acknowledged, when viewed from the perspective of the rational, goal-orientated ethos that prevails in modern life, the I-Thou relation appears to be most impractical and out of place in factory and commerce. But, of course, Buber repeatedly rejected any firm division between sacred and secular.

Between 1923 and his death in 1965, Buber tried to further clarify the dynamics of the interhuman. In the years following I and Thou Buber introduced the concept of dialogue in place of relation because it placed greater emphasis on action and movement. Although scholars such as M. Friedman and R. Horowitz speak of I and Thou as a philosophy of dialogue, this is not really precise. The dominant concept in that work is relation. We move towards others through dialogue, or away from them and back to ourselves through monologue. In this process there is a dialectical connection between our actions and attitudes, actions determining attitude and attitude shaping the way we act. Furthermore, through the Hebrew concept of teshuvah (turning) Buber emphasised the element of choice and responsibility in interhuman encounters. One can either turn to the other in order to enter into relation, or one can turn back to oneself. In contrast to the sharply dichotomous discussion of I and Thou, Buber now introduced the element of gradation into the debate by speaking of different

degrees of reflection upon self and different degrees with regard to our movement toward dialogue with the other. One can turn upon oneself, focusing on oneself, stroking oneself, delighting or weeping over oneself, or one can focus attention on the other, through varying degrees to a full dialogical relation with the other and, through the act of "inclusion" (Umfassung) experience the situation from the other's position. Dialogue thus entails a process of address and response, although this need not involve spoken language. Buber maintains that it is our responsiveness to being addressed by everyday situations that is the key to transcending our alienated condition. To live authentically is to recognise and respond to the signs of address that surround us. Buber speaks of discarding our "armour" which wards off signs of dialogue (Between Man and Man, New York, Macmillan, 1965 p.10). Like the I-Thou relation, genuine dialogue is immediate, unending and lacking in structure. In our anxious quest for stability, security and continuity, we erect elaborate defences in the form of structured thought systems of categories and topologies that conceal the immediate moments of encounter. According to Buber, mankind's task is to break down these defences and open the way to genuine encounters between persons.

Through the 1930s and 1940s, little change was evident in Buber's discussion of dialogue. In the 1950s Buber came to recognise the basic ambiguity in the concept of relation, which could easily be taken to refer to "a lasting disposition which is actualised in those happenings between two individuals as comrades, but also as a lasting disposition which is actualised in those happenings and which even include psychological events such as the recollection of the absent colleague " (Buber M. The Knowledge of Man - Selected Essays, New York, Harper and Row, 1967. p.75). At this time Buber entered into a dialogue with existentially minded psychiatrists and

psychologists in the United States. This forced him to be less poetic and esoteric, and the influence of German philosophy and romanticism is less evident. Also while religious faith continued to occupy his attention, he no longer finds it necessary to support his philosophical-anthropological and social position by recourse to religious rhetoric. Through the concepts of dialogue and the interhuman, Buber was able to distinguish between a relationship in the broad sense and the process by which actual or potentially mutual interaction between people occurs. For Buber, as opposed to many of the psychologists to whom he was talking, interhuman relations are not primarily a matter of feeling but consist of actual lived encounters, including glances between strangers and the encounter of opponents.

Furthermore, Buber sought to clarify the concept of dialogue by introducing the terms 'regard', 'accept' and 'confirm'. As a prerequisite one must turn to another, 'regard' the other as an unique individual, 'accept' the other in his or her differentness, and 'address' the other as the very person he or she is. For genuine dialogue to occur, one must confront another in genuine openness. And this may be in spite of conflicting views. One can accept a person as a distinct and separate other, while disagreeing with him or her:

"I confirm him as creature and creation, I confirm him who is opposed to me as him who is over against " (Buber M. The Knowledge of Man - Selected Essays, New York, Harper & Row, 1965 p.79).

Whereas, in earlier discussions, Buber spoke of the fundamental human drive to relate and commune, he now spoke of the fundamental need to confirm and be confirmed. He distinguished between confirming and accepting. Accepting means a person simply accepts what he sees in front of him. Confirming means a person must penetrate

behind appearances to the actual self of the other. Confirmation is a dynamic process that entails the growth of the other. When we confirm another, we act upon him or her directly, thereby helping the other to draw out his or her unique potential. At this time, Buber was presenting a more active interpretation of human relationships. The idea of becoming is basic to his view. Life is a dynamic process in which we grow from what we actually are at a given moment to what we are meant to become. Nietzsche's influence may be seen here with the individual person's obligation to actualise his or her full potential. Thus he subtitled Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is (London, Penguin, 1979). Similarly Kierkegaard emphasised the obligation of each person to become an individual:

"Whereas the idea of a substantial self that gets inserted or implanted into this body at the beginning of life suggests something ready-made that has only to grow ... the notion of the self as form suggests much better the thought that the self is not given ready made but has to be made in the course of existence, and that indeed authentic selfhood may never be attained at all. What is given at the outset is not a fixed entity but a potentiality for becoming a self " (Macquarrie J. Principles of Christian Theology, London, SCM Press, 1977 p.76).

The concept of confirming the other was further clarified by the idea of "imagining the real", which means identifying with the other person and imagining what he or she may be experiencing at that moment. But then it is necessary to go beyond "imagining the real" to "making present" - actually experiencing that which the other is experiencing. An example of making present is to actually feel the pain of the other. When this occurs, something new comes into being, which is not, according to Buber, simply

psychological, but ontological. It is not simply that the other becomes a self for me, but he or she becomes a self "with me".

In I and Thou Buber described love as the responsibility of an I for a Thou. In his later essays he discussed love from the perspective of entelechy. While each accepts the other as he or she is, this does not mean that neither wants the other to change. To love another is to recognise and address the other's potential for growth:

"Just by my accepting love, I discover in you what you are meant to become " (op. cit. p. 150).

This conception of love is linked to mutuality, to mutual address. This is a necessary prerequisite for full dialogue. Only in the interhuman realm can two beings, fully capable of speaking the basic words, enter into a mutual relation with one another. Buber recognised that various forms of human behaviour impede genuine dialogue. Frequently, in relations with others, dialogue is monologue - monologue pretending to be dialogue. Genuine dialogue entails a unity of heart, mouth and mind, of feeling, intention and action. Again, whenever we assume an analytic, reductive or objective stance to another person we impede genuine dialogue. When one is primarily concerned with the satisfaction of one's own needs, genuine dialogue is thwarted. Falseness or pretence are similarly impediments:

"Whatever the meaning of the word 'truth' in other realms, in the interhuman realm it means that men communicate themselves to one another as what they are letting no seeming creep in between themselves and the other " (op. cit. p. 77).

As this passage and many others make clear Buber's concept of truth is situational; it assumes different meanings in accordance with the sphere of human existence

involved. In the sphere of the interhuman it is synonymous with authenticity and genuineness. At this time Buber also adopted a more positive attitude to the realm of I-It. Revising his earlier interpretation of the twofold movement, he contrasted "primal setting at a distance" with "entering into relation" (The Knowledge of Man - Selected Essays, New York, Harper & Row, 1965 p. 60). Whereas Buber earlier had only grudgingly assigned a positive function to the I-It stance, he now acknowledged its importance. In order to be able to enter into relation fully, a person must first engage in the act of setting the other or the world at a distance. By remaining in a state of primitive union with the world, we remain unable to step into a relation with it.

These concepts Buber applied to the sphere of psychotherapy, for which he had always had a strong affinity. But Buber was critical, for example, of the dominant Freudian model of the psyche. Whereas Freud conceived of love in terms of the discharge of basic instinctual energy expressed in the sexual drives, Buber viewed love existentially in terms of the responsibility of I for a Thou. But in contrast to psychotherapy Buber believed that much psychological illness results from impaired or broken relationships between persons:

"A soul is never sick alone, but there is always a between-ness also, a situation between it and another existing being " (A Believing Humanism - My Testament, 1902-1965, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1967 p. 142).

Buber's ideas have proved attractive to some radical therapists, who have recognised the clinical value of his thinking.²⁰

²⁰ Among these therapists are R. D. Laing (see Self and Others, Baltimore, Penguin, 1971), R. F. Hobson (see Forms of Feeling: The Heart of Psychotherapy, London, Tavistock, 1985), I. D. Yalom (see Existential Psychotherapy, New York, Basic Books, 1980).

Community and Renewal

Buber further applied the thinking he had begun in I and Thou to the alienated condition of modern society. He believed that the task of the social thinker was not simply to describe and understand, but to change the world. Silberstein comments (p. 309 n.1):

"As stated in Chapter 5, this focus on the edifying, social orientation of Buber's thought differentiates my approach from those who seek to situate Buber in the context of continental, transcendental philosophy."

Earlier (op.cit. p.295 n.10) he had commented on those writers who overlooked or minimised Buber's social concerns and who also overlook the development of Buber's thinking in later years.²¹

He believed that to transform societies meant to transform persons, and this for him meant a continued critique of the sources of alienation, our submersion in the It world. Buber moved closer to Nietzsche in asserting that the I-It mode is one in which we use, possess and control others. It is rooted in the will to power and control:

"But the separated It of institutions is an animated clod without soul (golem), and the separated I of feelings an uneasily fluttering soul-bird. Neither of them knows man: institutions know only the specimen, feelings only the 'object'; neither knows the person, or mutual life" (Buber M. I and Thou, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1987, p. 63).

Although we can achieve breakthroughs into the I-Thou mode of relating, the reversion to I-It is inevitable, our recurring need to possess and control. But Buber

²¹ These include M. Theunissen (The Other: Studies in the Social Ontology of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre and Buber, Cambridge Mass., MIT Press, 1984), J. Bloch (Die Aponie des Du, Heidelberg, Lambert Schneider, 1977) and R. E. Wood (Martin Buber's Ontology, Evanston Ill., Northwestern University Press, 1969).

believed it was possible through dialogue to escape from the framework of power, in this he was unlike Nietzsche. Buber transposed the myth of the broken vessels of Lurianic Kabbalah and Hasidism into an existential key, appropriating the broken vessels and scattered sparks as a metaphor of the human condition. Scattered throughout the world, the sparks offer a person the opportunity to counter fragmentation and recover unity. Through our relations with others, we can liberate the sparks and bridge the abysses. Although we are unable to eliminate I-It relationships, Buber believed that we can provide enhanced opportunities for I-Thou relations. But this can only be achieved in a true community.

Buber's understanding of community is rooted in his assumption that people are relational, dialogical beings. It is not spatial proximity, shared feelings or common interests which are essential to genuine community, but a life situation in which persons stand in direct relation to one another and to a common centre:

"The true community does not arise through people having feelings for one another (though indeed not without it), but through, first, their taking their stand in living mutual relation with a living Centre, and, second, their being in living mutual relation with one another " (op. cit. p. 64).

The "centre" to which Buber refers has been variously interpreted as a leader, such as the Hasidic rebbe, a common experience, such as the Exodus, or God, the eternal Thou. In each instance Buber seemed to be arguing that a group of people among whom I-Thou relations have been established does not yet constitute a community. For community to come into being, the presence of a centre to which the members have a common relationship is also essential:

"The real essence of community is to be found in the fact - manifest or otherwise - that it has a centre. The real beginning of a community is when its members have a common relation to the centre overriding all other relations; the circle is signified (gezeichnet) by the radii, not by the points on the periphery " (Buber M. Paths in Utopia, Boston, Beacon Press, 1949, p. 135).

In Buber's view, the originality of the centre derives from its capacity to render the divine manifest to the community. The more earthly, creaturely, and attached to the centre it is the truer it is and the more capable of manifesting the divine (see Buber M. Nachlese, Heidelberg, Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1966). The members of a community must also engage in reciprocal relations. In explaining his idea of reciprocal relations Buber used the analogy of marriage, which he saw as the prototype of community. Buber distinguished between the feeling dimension and the existential relational dimensions of love. Whereas an individual has feelings, love occurs between persons, as distinct from the eroticism that prevails in the modern age that is based primarily upon using others for self enjoyment:

"Love is the responsibility of an I for a Thou " (Buber M. I and Thou, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1987, p. 29).

Like relation and dialogue, community refers not to a static form or structure but to a dynamic process. Like relation, community is unstable, characterised by an ongoing ebb and flow in which direct relations are repeatedly actualised and deactualized. It is a concrete, existential situation "the moments' answer to a moment's question" (Buber M. A Believing Humanism - My Testament, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1967. p. 88). Buber thus resisted the pressure to formulate his concept of community into an

ideological principle. But in an unpublished lecture delivered in 1929, he set forth three prerequisites for community (Erziehung zur Gemeinschaft quoted in Silberstein L. J. Martin Buber's Social and Religious Thought, New York, New York University Press, 1989, p. 178). First, it requires direct, unmediated relations between people. Secondly, people must relate to one another wholly and not exclude from the outset any dimension of their lives. In other words, one must relate to others with all ones being - qualities, capacities and potentialities. Thirdly, genuine community is based upon relations that are need-free and nonpurposive. Thus, the prerequisites for community parallel those for I-Thou relations. Community is less a matter of intimacy than of openness. Just as a love relationship does not require constant togetherness, neither does community. Buber contrasted community with the category of society, which refers to group life in its basic form and the interhuman which indicates an existential relation between two persons. By no means a utopian dream, genuine community can be actualised through the everyday relationships and occupations in which we are engaged.

While the social context sets the stage, it is not the equivalent of community. Community arises only when there are direct and total relations. Community, as Buber uses the word, refers simultaneously to a social context and an existential situation between persons. The concept of confirming the other enabled Buber to clarify further his interpretation of community. According to Buber "actual humanity exists only where this capacity unfolds" (The Knowledge of Man - Selected Essays, New York, Harper & Row, 1965 pp. 68-69), and one may judge the humanity of any social structure according to whether or not it facilitates this unfolding:

"In human society at all its levels, persons confirm one another in a practical way to some extent or other in their personal qualities and capacities, and a society may be termed human in the measure to which its members confirm one another" (Buber M. The Knowledge of Man - Selected Essays, New York, Harper and Row, 1965, p. 67).

To achieve genuine community, we must create the social conditions that facilitate dialogue, by the mutual confirmation of human beings by one another.

Buber's conception of community differs from those of Tönnies, Simmel and Weber because it draws on both social and existential components. For example, Simmel (see Wolff K. H. The Sociology of Georg Simmel, New York, Free Press, 1950) defines the dyadic relationship in terms of proximity, a social category; Buber defined it in terms of dialogue and confirmation, existential categories. As a consequence of his existential emphasis and his resistance to structure, Buber's conception of community is, from the perspective of contemporary sociology, highly elusive, but nonetheless a viable and significant alternative to the prevailing structural view of society. Buber's conception reflects a real human social need - the need to be fully together with one's fellows and not segregated into structural cells or groupings. We have previously observed that Buber is much concerned with the concept of alienation, indeed all his thinking is orientated to its overcoming. This links him closely with his existential precursors, themselves occupied with the situation of modern humankind, in which alienation and angst predominate. The social thinkers who earlier influenced Buber described the modern condition as one in which the natural, organic wholeness of community (*Gemeinschaft*) has been replaced by a depersonalised, artificial, mechanical social structure called society (*Gesellschaft*). This effectively cuts off the

modern person from the sources of meaning and comfort. They saw the recovery of *Gemeinschaft* as necessary to overcome this situation but were generally pessimistic about the prospect. In general terms Buber agreed with the critical aspect of these thinkers, but rather than focus on structures, like Nietzsche and Kierkegaard he focused on the existential condition. As Silberstein comments (p.183):

"Synthesizing a phenomenological analysis of the human condition with a description of the interhuman, Buber's discussion of alienation provides an existential depth missing from the writings of the social critics."

Because Buber describes humanity in terms of the unique capacity for relation as dialogue, he sees whatever prevents dialogic relations as the ultimate cause of alienation, namely the prevailing social and discursive frameworks. Even if we succeed in overthrowing the social and political structures that turn human labour into a commodity, we will not have succeeded in eliminating the forces that engender alienation. Similarly underlying the spread of *Gesellschaft* and bureaucracy are the modes of discourse that militate against dialogue. The task is to modify and restrict the degree of centralised authority. Insofar as every Thou necessarily reverts to being an It, alienation is inherent in the human condition. The modern age is one in which the domain of I-It has spread so that it infuses all aspects of our lives:

"In our age, the I-It relation, gigantically swollen, has usurped practically uncontested, the mastery and the rule. The I of this relation, an I that possesses all, makes all, succeeds with all, this I that is unable to say Thou, unable to meet a being essentially, is the lord of the hour"

(Buber M. The Eclipse of God, New York, Harper and Bros., 1952, p.129).

Although Buber acknowledged that his view was in conflict with the prevailing forms of life in industrialised societies, he rejected the criticism that his ideas were impractical and romantic. He believed that everyday we are presented with opportunities to enter into dialogical relationships. Nonetheless he was aware that if genuine community was restored to its rightful place in the modern world, industrial and political life as we know it would be drastically altered. His approach, however, was always gradualist rather than messianic.

Although Buber was opposed to the extension of power and centralised authority beyond what is necessary to adjudicate and resolve conflicts between groups and communities, he resisted the temptation to prescribe how the political task was to be modified and restricted. Buber opposed a "political surplus", the extension and application of power and centralised authority beyond what is necessary. Buber believed that the October Revolution demonstrated that one could change forms of government without eliminating the viewing of others as objects or things, or altering relations at the immediate, dyadic level. Buber believed the struggle against alienation could be overcome by deconstructing our ways of discourse, such as he carried out in I and Thou. But also he believed that education and the establishment of communal settings which facilitate dialogue would achieve the same end.

Buber's analysis has radical implications. If the structure of the modern state and economy rests upon the I-It world, a radical renewal of genuine community would undermine that structure, social, political and economic. Buber, however, rejected the revolutionary programme espoused by the Marxists. Marx believed that changes

effected through education would only be negated by the power of the existing socio-political structure. (See Avineri S. The Political and Social Thought of Karl Marx, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968) Buber agreed with Marx that socio-economic relationships in capitalistic societies foster alienation and yet he also saw that the socialist experiment in the Soviet Union had only succeeded in creating an oppressive centralised state. Had Buber been alive in 1991 he would no doubt have viewed the collapse of the Soviet system as inevitable. He did not believe that the social and political system could be changed by revolution, but by increasing the possibility of dialogic relation and community through education as opposed to revolution.

Buber's concept of education is somewhat different from the regular definition of the imparting and acquisition of knowledge. True to his thesis in I and Thou Buber believed that the fundamental human drive was to relate, rather than the drive to creativity:

"The being of the world as object is learned from within, but not its being as subject, its saying of "I" and "Thou". This teaches us that the saying of "I" and "Thou" is not the cognitive instinct, but the drive for communion." (Buber M. Between Man and Man, New York, MacMillan, 1965, p. 88).

Education refers to a process in which a person's basic, innate inclinations and qualities are drawn out and actualised in life situations. For genuine education to occur, the teacher-student relationship must be grounded in genuine dialogue. By relating to the student as an I to a Thou, the teacher helps the student to make actual the inherent capacity to relate dialogically to the world and other people.

Insofar as education is the means by which to struggle against the centralising tendencies of the modern state, it was, for Buber, political. Through education, we combat the "political surplus" of the state whereby power exceeds the needs of the hour. Accordingly, he rejected the exercise of compulsion and power in education. Submission to any person, theory, ideology or programme subverts the students' capacity for free and genuine communion. The major impediments to effective education are eros and the will to power. Whenever the educator uses the educational situation as a source of his or her pleasure or power, genuine education is precluded. By relying on rational discourse as its major vehicle, education runs counter to its goal. Insofar as it removes us from the immediate, concrete situation, rational discourse has an estranging effect, separating us from other persons.

While the edifying and educational categories are essential to our struggle against alienation, the ultimate goal is to construct communities that foster direct, mutually confirming relations among their members. Buber insisted that a renewal of genuine community is possible within the framework of an urbanised, highly rationalised society. He repeatedly criticised the growth of state power which stifled genuine existence and relation. In Buber's terms, the state is I-It institutionalised. In contrast to the state, genuine society is comprised of a network of decentralised, individual communities. Revolution for Buber did not mean the sudden overthrow of existing political structures, but the gradual displacement of the state by genuine communities based upon mutual production and direct relations. In Paths of Utopia (Boston, Beacon Press, 1949) Buber sets out most extensively his social philosophy, wherein he identified with the nineteenth century tradition of Utopian socialism. He describes socialism as a dynamic process of perennial becoming rather than an absolute

structure, or a state of existential becoming. He also had recognised that all efforts to solve social problems with political means produced societies not very different from those they displaced.

In the East, the dream of a socialist society had been crushed by the burden of totalitarian centralisation, while in the West the centralised state and highly rationalised social structure stifled personal relations. If change was to come it must come from within, beginning in the realm of interhuman relations. Buber singled out the Kibbutz as a concrete example of what he meant by authentic community. The co-operative communal settlements established in Israel beginning in the early twentieth century most closely approximated, in Buber's view, to the model of genuine community:

"Nowhere else is there this tireless groping for the form of community life best suited to this particular human group, and nowhere else is there this continual trying and trying again, this going to it and getting down to it, this critical awareness, this sprouting of new branches from the same stem and out of the same formative impulse " (op.cit.p.142).

Combining ideas drawn from Russian communes, Utopian socialism and the Bible, the Kibbutz movement represented a unique social experiment. Buber referred to it as "an experiment that did not fail" (op.cit. p.139). He intentionally avoided calling it a success: this would have been too static for his dynamic, process-orientated perspective. He was aware of its various shortcomings, but saw it a high-point in the human effort to achieve community:

"... This will not be forgotten in the history of mankind's struggle for self-renewal " (op.cit. pp.147-148).

Also in the years following Pointing the Way Buber turned his thinking, his existential categories towards international politics. To his critics his ideas seemed too abstract, but, by focusing on dialogue and the interhuman, Buber believed he was addressing the genuinely concrete, existential realities of human life neglected by most social critics. Characteristically, Buber sought to revise the way in which political realities were conventionally analysed. Most analyses, rooted in the detached, objectivistic perspective of the I-It stance, only succeeded in achieving a partial understanding of the situation. Dag Hammarskjöld, the then Secretary General of the United Nations, speaking to an audience at Cambridge in 1958, quoted extensively from Buber, and was engaged in translating I and Thou into Swedish at the time of his death. He explained:

"I excuse myself from having quoted at such length ... I have done so because, out of the depth of his feelings, Martin Buber has found expressions which it would be vain for me to try and improve " (See Foote W. Ed. Servant of Peace : A Selection of Speeches and Statements of Dag Hammarskjöld, New York, Harper & Row, 1963).

Religious Renewal

The philosophy of relations first articulated in I and Thou, which provided the categories for Buber's conception of person and community, also served as the basis for his mature conception of religion. In his early writings on Hasidism, Buber had advocated a highly individualised faith and was much influenced in this by Kierkegaard's individualistic existentialism. After 1918, he came to realise the inadequacies of this interpretation and began to speak of religion as a social

phenomenon for which the locus is the interaction between persons. Moreover he saw that the renewal of religion and the renewal of community are intertwined. Estranged from the dynamic, living reality of the divine-human encounter, human beings, in pursuit of certainty and security, construct systems of beliefs, norms and actions that they call "religions". Institutionalised religion, antithetical to and destructive of authentic religious faith, is a manifestation of alienation. At this point in Buber's thinking, one hears the voice of Kierkegaard:

"The individual no longer belongs to God, to himself, to his beloved, to his art or to his science, he is conscious of belonging in all things to an abstraction to which he is subjected by reflection, just as a serf belongs to an estate " (Kierkegaard S. The Present Age, New York, Harper and Row, 1962, p. 53).

Nevertheless Buber accepted the ontological claim of religious faith. Far from being an illusion, genuine faith derives from an encounter with something outside ourselves. So not satisfied, like Nietzsche, simply to unmask the alienating effects of religions, he wished to help reveal the power of religious faith to the modern person by revising the conventional views:

"But there is a danger, in fact, the utmost danger and temptation of man, that something becomes detached from the human side of this communion and makes itself independent, sounds itself off, seemingly perfects itself to reciprocity, yet puts itself in the place of real communion. The primal danger of man is religion " (Buber M, The Origin and Meaning. of Hasidism, New York, Horizon Press, 1960 p. 94).

But unlike hostile critics of religion, such as Feuerbach, Nietzsche and Freud, Buber insisted that the existential core of religion was authentic and essential to human existence. However, as a description of cultural reality, he considered Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God accurate. (See The Eclipse of God, New York, Harper & Bros, 1952 pp.14 & 20)

Buber's discovery and exposition of Hasidism has already been outlined and in formulating his critique of religion he drew on this. Hasidism rejects the artificial distinction between the sacred and the profane. The Hasidic myth of the sparks teaches the ubiquity of the sacred. We thus relate to the divine, not by withdrawing from our every day encounters, but by meeting life in all its fullness and by adopting an open, hallowing stance to those we meet. Thus the authentic religious quest does not begin with systematised doctrines and institutionalised patterns of behaviour but in our existential encounter with the immediate environment. Furthermore Buber found in Hasidism an implicit critique of the modern, fragmented, atomistic view of reality. Every human being is in a continuing state of becoming; we actualise ourselves through our encounters with others in such a way as to help them grow into that which they are intended to be. We fulfil this responsibility in and through the quality of the relationships we establish.

Redeeming the sparks through converse with the beings and things around us is the mythic analogy for dialogue. Moreover, insofar as the path to the divine is through encounters with other beings, the love of God depends on our love for other persons:

"The extended lines of relations meet in the eternal Thou. Every particular Thou is a glimpse through to the eternal Thou; by means of every particular Thou the primary word addresses the eternal Thou.

Through this mediation of the Thou of all beings, fulfilment and non-fulfilment, of relations comes to them: the inborn Thou is realised in each relation and consummated in none. It is consummated only in the direct relation with the Thou that by its nature cannot become It "

(Buber M. I and Thou, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1987, p. 99).

Buber taught that the key to our knowledge of the divine is genuine dialogue, arising from a direct, preconceptual encounter. He insisted that the language we use of God must reflect this relational view of the divine. This was in order to correct the philosophical tendency to view God in abstract terms. The metaphor "eternal Thou" also indicates, as in our relationship to other persons, that the effort to possess or dominate conflicts with genuine relation. Silberstein comments:

"Although mystics had rightly proclaimed the inadequacy of language and the distorting effects of institutions, Buber believed they failed to attribute adequate significance to social relations. In contrast to the mystic's tendency to unite the self and the divine, Buber insisted that to encounter God, we must preserve our unique individual selfhood. If people surrender or suppress their independent beings, no genuine divine-human encounter can occur " (Silberstein p.213).

In his attempts to revise misleading conceptions of faith, Buber said virtually nothing about individual religious experience. Nevertheless he did not deny the possibility of a direct divine-human encounter:

"I regard it as unqualifiedly legitimate when a man again and again, in a hour of religious fervour, adoring and praying, enters into a direct, 'world-free' relation to God " (Quoted in Rome B. and Rome S. Eds.

Philosophical Interrogations, New York, Harper and Row, 1970, p. 86),

also:

"The direct relation to God is in no way contested; its actuality, indeed, is recognised in all that befalls us, hence addresses us, and in all with which we react, hence answer. It is only added that the essential relation to God must find its complement in the essential relation to man " (Schilpp P. and Friedman M. Eds. The Philosophy of Martin Buber, La Salle, Illinois, Open Court, 1967, p. 710).

B. J. Fair has some interesting comments here ("Martin Buber and Some Theologians of Encounter" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 21, Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd, 1968 p.31):

"As the particular 'Thou' stands for a relation, not only one member of it, so the 'eternal Thou' of which Buber speaks is not a symbol for God but from our relation to Him. According to Buber, aspects of the world 'meet' us, evoking from us a response. 'Living means being addressed.' Since the dialogue is possible with all aspects of being, and since 'in each Thou we address the eternal Thou', we cannot make Buber's 'meeting' parallel with the divine human 'encounter' of the Christian writers referred to, for whom it is something intensely personal.

For Buber it is the giving of a man's whole being to the Thou of his life that makes an attitude religious, not its being consciously directed towards a God believed in. It is due to this emphasis on commitment

that he argues that there can be genuine religion without belief in God as personal."

Buber's line of argument above also influences his conception of faith. He contrasts what he claims is the Hebrew conception of faith and the Christian. He contrasts the Hebrew concept 'emunah', the developing of a trusting relationship with the divine with the Christian concept 'pistis' which he claimed was rooted in logical or noetic foundations. He claimed that the Hebrew conception refers to belief meaning to trust in and to be faithful to - in other words, it exists in the actual realm of relationship between persons. Buber claimed that the words of Romans 10. 9-10:

"If your lips confess that Jesus is Lord and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved. By believing from the heart you are made righteous; by confessing with your lips you are saved " (Jerusalem Bible).

entails the accepting and recognising as true of a proposition pronounced about the object of faith. Christians may very well challenge this hypothesis. It appears to be another example of Buber's dyadic thinking, but is an impression of Christianity which nonetheless requires an answer. Buber's interpretation of Christianity is discussed by J. Bloch and H. Gordon in Martin Buber: A Centenary Volume (New York, Ktav, 1984 pp,385-472).

Buber's view of revelation is similarly influenced concerning relation and dialogue. Revelation for him is neither a fixed body of teachings, as claimed by traditionalists, nor an inner experience or intuition, as maintained by theological liberals, but an event in which one encounters and enters into a relationship with another. Common to all divine-human encounters is neither form nor content, but meeting and response. The

encounter with the divine yields presence rather than conceptual knowledge, and confirmation of meaning. Buber's phenomenological conception of revelation differs from the content-orientated view commonly attributed to rabbinic Judaism. Revelation is spoken of as the "giving of Torah". The rabbis identified the traditional commandments as the content of revelation at Sinai. Buber accepted the Hebrew Bible as sacred scripture, which caused some to seize upon his inconsistency, arguing that he was no less obliged to remain open to the claim made for the sacredness of the rabbinic system of commandments. Revelation, in Buber's understanding is existential - it is address and response. In this, Buber seems reminiscent of Kierkegaard. So too in his conception of religious institutions which, he claims, are an expression of the desire to possess and control God, like ancient idolatry. Buber readily acknowledged that there are no objective criteria by means of which one can demonstrate the reality of the eternal Thou. But in light of Buber's resistance to rational theological discourse, his own efforts to describe God as the Thou that cannot be anything other than Thou appears to be inconsistent. It seems reasonable to assert however, that Buber, rather than describing a metaphysical reality, is making what some contemporary philosophers call a grammatical statement - that is, he is saying something about the conditions for talking about God. Therefore, when he speaks of God's nature, he is not saying that this is how God is, objectively speaking, but rather this is how God is manifest in our relationship to Him.

In contrast to the rabbinic tradition, which viewed the revelatory event at Sinai as the point of origin for authentic Judaism, Buber insisted that the event at Sinai represented only one particular stage of the process. The soul of Judaism expressed itself, not in law or dogma, but in a fundamental faith attitude, which was already found in the

patriarchal narratives. As early as 1918, Buber had characterised the relationship between Israel and Yahweh as an I-Thou relationship (see Kingship of God, New York, Harper & Row, 1967). Buber interpreted the Sinai event as a dialogical one in which God addressed each Thou individually and not collectively. He believed that in the biblical understanding of the world genuine relationships are fostered and actualised in communities. In order to actualise the goals of creation, Yahweh turned to a specific community. According to the biblical concept of the election of Israel, the divine plan can only be carried out by a community:

"The higher, the decisive principle, which alone can knit together the relationship to God and the relationship to man -the principle of love - requires neither organisations nor institutions but can be given effect at any time, at any place. ... Within the communal forms adopted in place of a state - that is, the local communities - active love, in the guise of mutual help, recurs as a basic social element " (Buber M. On Judaism, New York, Schocken, 1967 p.212).

CHAPTER III

ZIZIOULAS AND BUBER IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

Communion and Autonomy

Having reviewed the thinking of Zizioulas and Buber in some detail, this chapter will make a comparison between them, to bring out the common philosophical ground, as well as other philosophical connections in the modern period.

Much philosophical speculation in both the last century and in this has focused on the search of human beings for authentic existence, however that is conceived and it is conceived in various ways. Although expressions have varied considerably, the search is for a way of being which is free from necessity and alienation, a way of life which is fulfilling and truly personal. The search for personal identity continues in the face of the widely-acknowledged depersonalising forces of industrial society and commerce. This search is the mainspring of the philosophical and literary work of many philosophers, and for Martin Buber it is his *raison d'être*.

In the Christian perspective, Zizioulas believes that the answer to the modern quest for personal identity lies in communion with the personal God. In this chapter I hope to reinforce this argument but also demonstrate that the languages which are spoken by theologians and philosophers are not as different as may at first appear. Indeed, even the points of divergence clarify as well as do points of convergence.

Some theologians would maintain that philosophy must always be part of the dynamic structure of theology, for the christian thinker must confront God's revealing word with his understanding of his own existence and of the world. Karl Rahner maintains this position, arguing that philosophy should be considered the self-reflection of a mind

to which God has revealed himself implicitly through his grace (See Theological Investigations, Vol. VI, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1969 pp.72-75, 78-81):

"The anonymous Christians - whether they know it or not, whether they distinguish it from the light of their natural reason or not - are enlightened by the light of God's grace which God denies to no man. From this point of view, it is correct to say that in every philosophy men already engage inevitably and unthematically in theology, since no-one has any choice in this matter."

In answer to the question of how we come to believe in God these theologians would point to two sources. On the one hand there is the whole tradition of the Jewish-Christian movement, and on the other the contemporary experience of all human beings, whether they are Christians or not. And one of the significant aspects of both is the existential-relational approach to reality.

At the beginning of Being as Communion, Zizioulas emphasises the intimate link between the relational in God and in man. In doing this he goes against the dogmatic manuals of the West with their implicit and explicit individualism and substantialistic way of thinking. This latter approach has focused on the person, as has been previously indicated, in terms of rational individuality, (on the basis of Boethius' definition of Person as "naturae rationalis individua substantia". Contra Eutych. et Nest. 3). But in more recent years other theologians have also come to see the importance of the relational. Indeed some have been directly influenced in this regard by Martin Buber. Emil Brunner is such a one: in Truth as Encounter (London, SCM, 1964) (an enlarged edition of The Divine Human Encounter) he maintains that the great enemy of Christian theology and faith down the centuries has been the "objectivisation" of faith.

In ordinary scientific and philosophical thought we are governed and rightly so, by the notions of subjectivity and objectivity. Faith does not move in this dimension at all, which with its concept of object and subject belongs to the realm of things, but instead moves in the existential - event dimension. Faith has to deal with the I-Thou relationship, the dimension of the Infinite Thou (op.cit.p.114):

"When God reveals Himself in His word, to a person who has faith, He communicates to him, not propositions but Himself as a Person who speaks and discloses Himself. An exchange takes place here that is wholly without analogy in the sphere of thinking. The sole analogy is in the encounter between human beings, the meeting of person with person."

Kierkegaard expresses the same idea in respect of his objections to Hegel:

"When I stand opposite to God, I am face to face with him who unconditionally is no 'something', who in the unconditional sense is pure 'Thou' " (op.cit.p.115).

Brunner alleges that early in the history of the Church the true nature of faith as a personal relation of correspondence between God in Christ and the believer was forgotten, and faith became the subjective assent to an objective doctrine, authorised by the Church. Zizioulas echoes this thesis by saying:

"It is communion which makes beings what they are" (op.cit.p.17) and "communion can only exist between concrete and free persons". He immediately makes a link with other thinkers who emphasise the existential and the interpersonal. But there is indeed more to it even than this, because one can perceive in Being as Communion and elsewhere an apologetic stance in respect of contemporary culture, although he does

not emphasise this greatly. In beginning his study with the being of God and moving on to the being of man Zizioulas makes a real, substantial and ontological link between them by focusing upon the personal, the interpersonal and the existential. Because of this method it becomes possible to enter into dialogue with the humanistic and secular society, albeit that we do not make overarching claims for our God-talk.²²

It was from a similar apologetic motivation that Martin Buber turned to Nietzsche as a mentor in his own quest for self-understanding and that of contemporary society. Reference has previously been made to Nietzsche's famous "God is dead." statement, but it is easy to focus on the statement and to miss the subtlety of the wider context of the passage. Of far greater significance are the words, "And we have killed him ". This statement is commonly understood to be about the existence or non-existence of God, but rather should be seen as a statement concerning the relevance of God to a culture which has so evolved as to exclude Him. The "gravediggers" would seem to be those persons and socio-economic forces whose focus is totally secular but also Nietzsche may be referring to those philosophers and theologians who have buried God in a torrent of words and who do make overarching claims for their God-Talk.

²² We have observed previously Buber's strictures on this point. It may be that we cannot remain within the world of "Thou" - in the burning moment of pure relation with God. We must acknowledge that all third-personal talk about God is makeshift, or we might call it "dialectical". R. Gregor Smith has this to say ("What is Real Life?" in Vidler A. R. Theology Vol. XLVII, London, SPCK, 1944 p.204):

"Dialectical theology springs out of the dialectical situation of living: daily life is characterized by the intermingled use of the vocative and accusative cases, and the linguistic necessity corresponds to the actuality of our human situation. Theology, therefore, is not reduced to silence, but to dialectic - that is, to the saying of apparently contradictory things, to indirect statement, to dramatic presentation, to the use of dialogue and irony. Statement of the direct and single truth is not possible - 'directness', says Kierkegaard in a notable phrase, 'is paganism'; paraphrasing Augustine's discussion of the nature of the Trinity we may say that theology speaks not for the sake of speaking but lest we should be silent altogether. In this connection Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript is the locus classicus for the elaboration of the necessity of indirectness in theology." Indeed it can be suggested that the directness of language which was in fact a travesty of language and of truth was the sole object of Buber's criticism in I and Thou.

Zizioulas holds that it was against the background of Greek monism and Gnosticism that Ignatius, Irenaeus and Athanasius expounded the being of God as comprehensible through personal relationships and love. Karl Rahner contrasts this Christian perspective with the different Greek perspective based on the pattern of nature. (See Rahner K. Ed. Sacramentum Mundi, London, Burns & Oates, 1975 pp.488-495) By contrast with the Greek preoccupation with science, art and culture, the Hebrew emphasis is emphatically on the human, especially the nation's own history seen through the eyes of faith in an intensely personal God who demands a personal response from his people. Martin Buber also emphasises this aspect asserting that the verb "to know" presupposes direct relation in Hebrew.

A similar point is made by R. Gregor Smith ("What is Real Life?" in Vidler A. R. Ed. Theology Vol. XLVII, London, SPCK, 1944 p.205). In criticising an article by Fr. Jarrett-Kerr he says:

"What von Hugel calls the 'is-ness' of God is surely never an isolated apprehension of the inquiring intellect but arises for creatures out of the self-giving of God in his Word. In brief, not being but relation is the beginning for us. ... It seems clear that the doctrine of the Word, of the living Incarnation of Being, is illumined rather than observed by Buber's insistence on the living relation between I and Thou."

The ground of all things is the personal God, which leads to an emphasis upon decision and freedom as expressions of this personal element. Zizioulas alludes to this point in his exposition of personhood in the ancient world. It is a concept which is impossible in the monistic framework, since freedom is an essential aspect of personhood, and freedom is impossible in the monistic understanding of the cosmos. It is this monistic

and closed ontology which is broken by creation ex nihilo, from a source outside itself. Moreover the world and human beings become products of freedom. In the New Testament this personal element finds full expression in confidence in the God of Israel who became man in Jesus Christ.

Because of the absence of the personal in Greek thinking, there is a similar absence of the relational since this is an aspect of the personal, indeed, according to Zizioulas, the essential aspect of the personal. The legacy of this for the Western world, particularly with its objectivistic, rationalistic and instrumentalist scientific worldview is an individualistic, and autonomous or almost atomistic, view of human beings.

He observes that this tendency has its origins in the past ("Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of theology, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.405-406):

"It must be noted that although both East and West were from the beginning anxious to stress the difference between the nature of God and the nature of man - hence their agreement at Chalcedon - there was, nevertheless, always a tendency in the West to view the two natures from the angle of their particular qualities, and to go to the mystery of salvation with a somewhat overdeveloped interest in what happens to man as man.²³ With the help of a cross-fertilisation between the Boethian and the Augustinian approaches to man, our Western philosophy and culture have formed a concept of man out of a

²³ Zizioulas traces the historical development of this tendency and concludes: "It can be demonstrated that in all of these cases the real issue lies in the attempt to understand man by looking introspectively at him either as an autonomous ethical agent (Tertullian, Antiochenes) or as the Ego of a psychological complex (Augustine) or as a substance possessing certain potencies (Scholastics) " (ibid).

combination of two basic components: rational individuality on the one hand and psychological experience and consciousness on the other. It was on the basis of this combination that Western thought arrived at the conception of the person as an individual and/or a personality, i.e. a unit endowed with intellectual, psychological and moral qualities centred on the axis of consciousness."

Rahner considers that the modern era is typified by a view of human beings as autonomous selves, but it must also be noted that they are defined additionally as autonomous "substances", the absolute epitome of the western rationalistic and essentialistic way of thinking.²⁴ It was against this philosophical doctrine that Kierkegaard, the personalists and existentialists rebelled. Buber takes up this cause with his existential philosophy of the interhuman, but one which is unwilling to abandon what he sees as the necessary link between humankind and God, the Eternal Thou. This is a primary, fundamental and positive link with Zizioulas who refers to the attempt of humanism to supplant Christianity and detach the concept of the person from all reference to God. That this realisation of the crucial aspect of subjectivity is, in the main, divorced from theology should not blind us to its centrality. Nor should ignorance of it, being bound up historically and existentially with theology, do the same.

²⁴ Zizioulas notes this tendency also ("Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975, p.404):

"This employment of Greek ontology has, indeed occurred in the theology of the great Medieval Scholastics who not only found Aristotelian Philosophy helpful and used it extensively, but by using the Latin concept of *natura* which, as Heidegger has shown, (An Introduction to Metaphysics, 1959 p.13 ff) was an unfortunate translation destined to obscure the Greek notion of *physis*, they reinforced the Western approach to *natura* as an objectified substance. As a result of this, theology was able to speak of man as substance possessing certain qualities of its own and, again in the sense of the typical Aristotelian idea of *entelecheia*, as a being with a certain potency inherent in its nature."

Rahner gives much greater definition, since he sees this inner dividedness as a symptom of all human endeavours and thinking. Like Zizioulas however, he believes that this gulf can be overcome if people can see how theological statements connect with their understanding of self, as witnessed in their own experience. (See Spirit in the World, New York, Seabury Press, 1968 and Hearers of the Word, revised by J. B. Metz, New York, Herder, 1969). Rahner believes that a clear-cut adequate distinction between the creative working of God's grace and its conceptual interpretation by man is not possible: no clear line can be drawn by reflective introspection between the transcendence of the mind towards God and the mind's participation by grace in the inner life of God. Rahner seems to speak from real experience of fellowship with God, a fellowship where demarcation lines cannot be drawn, a relationship which is so close. This line of argument is what Rahner refers to as "transcendental anthropology". He maintains that, far from opposing a theocentric or Christocentric focus in theology, theological anthropology enables the Christian to understand and correlate the Christian mysteries in a way which relates them to the fundamental a priori structures of his own experience. He says (Theological Investigations Vol. IX, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972 pp.28-30):

"As soon as man is understood as the being who is absolutely transcendent in respect of God, "anthropocentricity" and "theocentricity" in theology are not opposite, but strictly one and the same thing, seen from two sides. ... Similarly this anthropological focus in theology is not opposed to or in competition with a Christological focus."

Rahner goes on to maintain (op.cit.pp.33-42) that the foundation of our faith can only be God himself insofar as He is our salvation through His absolute self-communication. Salvation is mediated in and through grace, which is the grace of Christ. If Trinity and Incarnation are implicit in the mystery of grace, it becomes intelligible that grace not only belongs to the core of the salvation/revelation reality, but is this core. He says (ibid):

"Now it is only possible to speak of this grace in a meaningful way at all within a transcendental anthropological context. For, without destroying the fact that grace is God himself in self-communication, grace is not a 'thing' but - as communicated grace - a conditioning of the spiritual and intellectual subject as such to a direct relationship with God. The most objective reality of salvation is at the same time necessarily the most subjective: the direct relationship of the subject with God through God himself."

A similar point is made by R. Gregor-Smith ("What is Real Life" in Vidler A.R. Ed. Theology Vol. XLVII, London, SPCK, 1944 p.205):

"In the Thomist view, the Incarnate Word becomes merely an idea built into a cunning tessellation of human experience; whereas in a theology of the Word the Word Himself remains His own Master: we do not know God except through His Word; every knowledge we have of God is therefore framed and mediated in the relation which He Himself establishes for us."

Rahner considers that what he calls theological anthropology can make the central christian mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and grace more credible and

significant to the contemporary Christian than they appear to be in the more familiar presentation of the traditional theologies. In the same passage Rahner makes some very pertinent observations concerning philosophy in the period since Descartes. He states that much Western philosophy has merely underlined the individualism of theology and what he calls the "transcendental philosophy of the autonomous subject. So Rahner says (Theological Investigations Vol. IX, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972 pp.28-30):

"Plato, Aristotle and Thomas will remain immortal philosophers from whom we must learn. But this does not alter the fact that philosophy today and hence theology too cannot and must not return to the stage before modern philosophy's transcendental anthropological change of direction since Descartes, Kant, German Idealism (including its opponents), up to modern Phenomenology, Existentialism and Fundamental Ontology. With few exceptions, e.g. Blondel, it can be said that this whole philosophy is most profoundly unchristian insofar as it pursues a transcendental philosophy of the autonomous subject, who stands aloof from the transcendental experiences in which he experiences himself as continually dependent, with his origin in and orientation towards God."

Dasein and Person

Since Rahner has been introduced in this context it is very instructive to realise that he was much influenced in his thinking by Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Rahner's instinct in concentrating on Heidegger was very sound, since by doing so he was in

touch with much modern philosophy and a phenomenological approach. For Heidegger is representative of a whole philosophical approach in the modern era, namely, asserting that being-with-others is a fundamental mode of being for the human person.²⁵ Heidegger elaborates a metaphysic of the human person; of man's personal existence (Dasein, literally means "thereness"). For Heidegger (*Sein und Zeit*, 1927, English translation Macquarrie J. & Robinson E. *Being and Time*, London, SCM, 1962) existence means the actuality of human existence. He begins by asking the fundamental metaphysical question why there is anything rather than nothing. It is not entirely clear what sort of answer he expects, but his philosophy is an attempt to set out how we are to understand things as they are and as they are to us. So his starting point is the fundamental distinction between Sein and Dasein. The latter is the form of being that applies to us as conscious and self-conscious beings. Dasein is always mine (Jemeinigkeit). Hence much of what Heidegger has to say about Dasein has to do with the problems and standing of the individual in relation to the world. This is what gives his philosophy the appeal it has for many people in troubled times, Heidegger says that what characterises Dasein is Sorge (care); it involves a concern for whatever is its

²⁵ Many contemporary philosophers and theologians approach their work from a phenomenological point of view. According to Immanuel Kant, man has no direct contact with the noumenal world: his experience and reasoning are confined to phenomena. This phenomenological method is now applied to every conceivable field, not only philosophy, indeed its triumph is due to the fact that it is only a method, capable of almost endless application. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) put the relationship of that which appears and appearance into a new perspective, in which objects were seen to be explained through the mode in which they are given in our consciousness. The field of conscience performances goes at once beyond all simple schemes of subject/object. Heidegger follows this line of thought in taking up the unexplained structural unity of the phenomenological subject and tries while investigating the mode of being of the 'productive' subject, to find also the "place" of the transcendental. Husserl gives no ontological analysis of "being conscious". Heidegger answers as we have seen above. In greater or lesser proximity to Husserl and Heidegger, the phenomenology of the concrete consciousness has been extended by Sarte and Merleau-Ponty. Phenomenological and hermeneutic thinking has advantages over the deductive style of formal logic; it does not really offer grounds from outside the thing itself, but affects the presence of the "business itself" in its own proper medium. It can offer new horizons in theology, enlarging the canon of themes and material.

object. In particular, there is our concern, indeed, obsession with the precariousness of the human self "das Seiende, dem es in seinem sein um dieses selbst geht" ("a being as such that its being is in question").

His aim is to describe the experience of being in pre- or non-philosophical terms. For him self-understanding is the medium in which "being" makes itself known as event. The historical or existential experience of this event cannot be demonstrated, but only expounded and interpreted. As already stated the point of departure for Heidegger's investigation of being is man. Man is not simply consciousness, but existence, and by existence Heidegger means being-in-the-world, being-with, being-in, understanding, speech, grasp of one's own possibilities, being-in-front-of-oneself, care, dread, being-to-death, being held by nothingness. Time or historicity gives human existence its wholeness by permitting self-projection or being-in-front-of-oneself and by enabling being to emerge from man's becoming: what is something one minute is nothing the next, and man is moving towards nothing, and as soon as he has grasped that nothing, it vanishes into nothingness. Being is temporality, is being-thrown-into-nothingness, being is appearance, becoming and nothing. Man is not himself identical with being, even as consciousness, mind or ego, but is the guardian or shepherd of being because of his speech and thought. Being discloses itself to him in his thought. And truth emerges. By truth Heidegger means not coincidence of fact and statement, but self-illuminating being. And that is also freedom.

As I have already observed in western metaphysics, the understanding of being was based solely on beings as objects in the world, the Greek perspective. Existence and essence were attributed to all beings. It was an attribution which veiled the primary nature of truth in being, which is that of event, Heidegger brings us right back to this

truth - man as the "thereness" of being is the only possible foundation of any metaphysics of essence-existence.

It was from his early academic career that Rahner engaged in a dialogue with Heidegger. This became evident in his doctoral thesis, subsequently published as Spirit in the World (New York, Seabury Press, 1968 and in Hearers of the Word, New York, Seabury Press, 1969). It contrasted St Thomas Aquinas' philosophy of knowledge with the philosophy of Kant, and even more, with that of Heidegger. Rahner asserts that Heidegger was right when he said that Dasein was the questioner whose fundamental question about Being 'runs through' the beings of the world in its pre-grasp of the world's Horizon. Heidegger was wrong, however, when he affirmed the essential finitude and historicity of being because he thought that man's question about Being runs through the beings of the world only to terminate in nothing. Rahner's claim is that the termination is not Nothing, but infinite Existence. Thus the finite historicity of Dasein and Dasein's world is anchored in God's Infinite Eternity. For without the human mind's pre-grasp of its infinite Horizon, the history of the human world could not be known.²⁶

We can thus observe in these early works of Rahner a very strong *emphasis* on experience, especially of personal encounter in the mind's natural transcendence

²⁶ Heidegger's attitude to the problem of God is interesting here. According to MacQuarrie An Existentialist Theology, London, Penguin, 1973 p.68) Heidegger does not deny the existence of God, but affirms his absence. Neither does he deny that there may have been a genuine existential knowledge of God, but thinks "that original knowledge has been so overlaid, trivialized and stultified by the deadening hand of tradition and dogmatism that God is now absent. ... If this interpretation is correct then his affirmation of the absence of God would be very much like Nietzsche's assertion that God is dead. ... Heidegger speaks somewhat contemptuously of the 'remnants of Christian theology which have not yet been expelled from philosophical thought', yet his own return to philosophy's original search for being is also a return to the quest for God. In Six Existentialist Thinkers, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956 pp.86-109) H. J. Blackham says of Heidegger: 'His philosophy takes shape as the historical quest for being, and is seen to be essentially religious.' Copleston concurs, in Existentialism and Modern Man, he says 'His philosophy is, in a sense, a seeking for God'."

towards God and the mind's participation by grace in the inner life of God. Rahner develops this theme further (See Theological Investigations Vol. I, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961 pp. 300-302, 310-315). As we have seen the term "existential" is used by Heidegger to designate a fundamental structure of Dasein, the subject whose intentionality is directed towards the world and Being. Contrary to the extrinsicist position of the manuals, God's decree elevating man to the supernatural order produces an intrinsic ontological effect on man's human nature. For, if that decree is to be a real offer of grace, it must make human nature capable of accepting it. Therefore God's real offer of his grace produces a "supernatural existential" in the human soul. This "existential" is a permanent modification of the human spirit which transforms its natural dynamism into an ontological drive to the God of grace and glory. The supernatural existential is not grace itself but only God's offer of grace which, by ontologically modifying the soul, enables it to freely accept or reject grace.²⁷

²⁷ In this context Zizioulas places Rahner at one end of the spectrum:
 "This discussion represents another variant of the old problem concerning the creation of man in the image of God. It is noteworthy that as in the case of Grace and Revelation, so in this case, too, the argument has been one of either-or: the imago Dei has either been 'lost' (total depravity) or 'preserved' after the Fall. As a result of this, man has been presented either by stressing his state of sin (eg R. Niebuhr) or emphasising his capacity for God (eg K. Rahner)." ("Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.404).
 Zizioulas has an interesting footnote which sheds further light on Rahner's ideas about Heidegger (Zizioulas pp. 44-46 n. 40). Zizioulas believes that the use of Heidegger in the interpretation of patristic theology runs into fundamental difficulties, and he asks several questions:
 "a) Is it possible for death to be an ontology outside time in Heidegger, or of an ontology within time predicated of God in the Greek Fathers?
 b) Is it possible for death to be an ontological concept in the Fathers, who regard it as the last enemy of being?
 c) Is it possible to regard the concept of truth, in the sense of a manifestation of or outgrowth from oblivion, as an inevitable attribute of the ontology predicated of God?"
 And he adds:
 "These questions prove to be crucial when one takes into consideration that those contemporary Western theologians who have attempted to use Heidegger in their theology have not succeeded in avoiding either the introduction of the concept of time in God (K. Barth); or the view that the concept of revelation is an essential ontological category of the being of God, so that the 'economy', the mode of God's revelation to man, constitutes the basis, the starting point and the ontological structure of the theology of the Holy Trinity (K. Rahner)."

Bearing Zizioulas' thesis in mind it should be noted at this point that Rahner's "supernatural existential" might also be described as a "relational" existential. God's offer of grace is an offer to enter into a relationship with humankind, a relationship which is motivated by love. Rahner comments "God makes a creature whom he can love" (ibid) and who can love in return. He adds in the same passage that humans must be able to receive this love "have a congeniality for it ... a real potency for it." Moreover, the human being "is thought and called into being so that Love might bestow itself." If Zizioulas is right in asserting that relation is of the very being of the Godhead then it must follow that for humankind "The capacity for the God of self-bestowing personal Love is the central and abiding existential of man as he really is" (ibid).

It also follows that this will produce in humankind the feeling of incompleteness which results from separation from God. Zizioulas alludes to this in his account of biological hypostasis and much modern literature alludes to the incompleteness of human beings who find themselves in a world without obvious points of reference.

Rahner focuses our attention upon the ontological drive to God and Zizioulas shows himself well aware that this drive, if denied, produces the existential anguish that Heidegger so well describes. He says:

"For since the Fall results from the claim of created man to be the ultimate point of reference in existence, it is, in the final analysis, the state of existence whereby the created world tends to posit its being

Furthermore Zizioulas sees other problems arising from the use of Heidegger: "The insistence on the monarchy of the Father ... excludes completely a differentiation of the persons justified ontologically by the 'horizon' of their manifestation. In God such a horizon is non-existent and inconceivable, and consequently ontology as manifestation is (perhaps?) possible for the 'economic' theology which is accomplished 'in time' but not also for an ontology of the trinitarian existence of God who is outside time" (ibid). Perhaps here also one sees an insight into the problem of the Filioque.

ultimately with reference to itself and not to an uncreated being, God.

... The fall consists in the refusal to make being dependent on communion, in a rupture between truth and communion " (Zizioulas J. p.102).

Because of this "The world ultimately consists of a fragmented existence in which beings are particular before they can relate to each other; you first are and then relate " (op.cit.p.103). He also says ("Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds., Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.425):

"The **ekstasis** of personhood becomes in the fallen situation experienced as **apo-stasis** (distance) between person and nature. By being person man was meant to offer to creation the possibility of hypostatic catholicity, i.e. the fulfilment of nature's ultimate reference to Being, a fulfilment which would take place as a unity respecting the integrity and diversity (**diaphora**) of beings. This would allow man the unique honour of being **the priest of creation**, i.e. the one in and through whom creation would be **referred back (anaphora)** to the Creator. But the fall of man destroys this possibility precisely because man's ekstatic movement, by being limited to creation does not allow for the catholicity of creation or nature to be ekstatic towards what is eternal to it in and through the human person, since the latter, by his introversion has lost his true ekstatic movement towards 'outside' creation, i.e. towards the Creator."

Superficially the language that Heidegger and Zizioulas use is very different, but both view the primary nature of truth in being as event. For Heidegger this event fades out into nothingness because mankind is the only ultimate reference point. Zizioulas has observed (op.cit.p.107 & footnote), without reference to a beyond, in respect of "an ontology of the world taken as it is", there is only self-understanding as "being-unto-death" and "being-unto-nothingness because "all attempts to define truth as "being-unto-life" require automatically the idea of being beyond created existence". Rahner develops this idea. For Heidegger man's question about Being runs through the beings of the world only to terminate in nothing. Heidegger thus performs a most valuable function in crystallising the ultimate nihilism of the "autonomous subject" without God. Rahner's claim is that the termination is not Nothing, but infinite Existence. The finite historicity of Dasein and Dasein's world is anchored in God's Infinite Eternity. For Zizioulas the primary nature of truth is being as an event of communion, communion with God (or He with us) and our fellow human beings. Man is existence, Dasein, but understood as being-in-communion.

This is also the understanding of being demonstrated by Buber in his theory of the two primary words I-Thou and I-It. I-It is essentially about particularity, being-in-themselves and I-Thou is about being-in-relation. Or put another way I-It is about the rupture between truth and communion and I-Thou the overcoming of that rupture. The emphasis in Buber is upon the relationship between truth and action or praxis. As Zizioulas observes:

"'Doing the truth', which is a biblical theme, becomes impossible for man precisely because faith and praxis in his fallen existence are able to coincide only for 'a moment', and this 'moment of existence' simply

reveals what 'existence' implies but does not attain " (Zizioulas J. p. 104).

As I have previously indicated Martin Buber focused his attention also on humankind's existential situation, the crisis in contemporary existence, especially in relation to the individual person's relationships with other people and with God. His focusing upon Dasein links him with Heidegger and Rahner, but also with Zizioulas, since Buber believed that the solution to our problems lay in a correct relationship in community with God and other people. His principal emphasis is therefore relational. This is again a most important link with Zizioulas, since the latter's insight into "being as communion", is also a relational one. In making this connection between Buber and Zizioulas it may be objected that there is a difference of emphasis here. In Buber the emphasis seems to be upon relationship, whereas for Zizioulas the emphasis seems to be on the person as the initiator of dialogue, rather than the dialogue as such. Zizioulas specifically says:

"But this communion is not a relationship understood for its own sake, an existential structure which supplants 'nature' or 'substance' in its primordial ontological role - something reminiscent of the structure of existence met in the thought of Martin Buber " (Zizioulas J. p.17).

It may well be that Zizioulas has not fully taken cognisance of the full range of Buber's teaching and specifically the modifications he made to his thinking in later years. These will be elaborated later. Suffice to say at this point that it is essential to understand I-Thou and I-It as attitudes, not the relation itself - the posture a person takes towards the outside world. And an attitude or posture is exclusively the

prerogative of the person, and can only originate in the same, in a sense of which Zizioulas would entirely approve.

As noted before, Buber drew back from the brink of nihilism to which he had been drawn by Nietzsche because he was deeply convinced of life's ultimate meaningfulness. As much as by his Jewish faith, this retreat from the brink was occasioned by his humanitarian preoccupation, his faith in people and the power of the interhuman and truly personal in the face of the alienating forces of modern society. Although seemingly some distance theologically from Zizioulas, there is a connection between Buber's Hasidic perspective and the relational one of Zizioulas. Both perspectives may be called existential since they are event-based, they are about a particular mode of living and being. Zizioulas emphasises that we cannot even know of God's being except in the context of communion. In the Lurianic myth of the broken vessels, our knowledge of God is rendered fragmentary by our separation from other things and other persons, our knowledge of God is drastically curtailed by the breakdown of communion. The existential and interpersonal element in faith is further emphasized by Buber in his emphasis on relating to the divine, not by withdrawing from everyday encounters, but by meeting life in all its fullness and by adopting an open, hallowing stance to those we meet, our encounter with the immediate environment. Indeed Buber taught that the path to the divine is through encounters with other beings, genuine dialogue arising from a direct, preconceptual encounter.

Furthermore he insisted that the language we use of God must reflect this relational view of the divine. He felt this to be necessary to correct the philosophical tendency which we have already noted, to view God in abstract terms. It seems that this view is almost the same intuition of the divine-human encounter as we see in Zizioulas'

emphasis upon there being no possibility of speaking of God's being without the concept of communion.

It would, however, probably be right here to note that Buber appears to identify classical Christian theology too readily with the Greek subject-object mode of thinking. Zizioulas goes to great lengths to demonstrate that the Greek Fathers went to enormous lengths to adapt the Greek thought-forms to a thoroughly biblical and Hebraic perspective, since his whole thesis is that their way of thinking is thoroughly relational, a point which seems lost on Buber.

It was indicated earlier that there is a muted apologetic element in Zizioulas focusing on the element of communion and the interpersonal, a bridge of understanding between the theologically based communion between concrete and free persons and the general existentialist emphasis on the personal and the quest for self-understanding.

In the light of the biblical perspective and Christian revelation Zizioulas focuses on personhood. True to his main theme our understanding of humanity stems from our understanding of God. To the West, Zizioulas' most important contribution may lie in this emphasis on the personal aspect of the Godhead, thus immediately making a comprehensible approach to the nature of God more possible through the concept of communion. In the West, where the 'ontology' of God has been seen as consisting in a consideration of the substance of God, the whole idea of the Trinity has become remote from ordinary Christians and far too abstract and rationalistic. Zizioulas' grasp of the truth that the unity of God is not in the one divine substance, but in the hypostasis, in the person of the Father, makes possible a wholly new and personally relevant understanding of God. In other words, a God who has a substantial unity seems a remote being, whereas a God who is a truly personal being, and whose unity is

a personal unity, seems immediately more relevant to us in our quest for personal identity and wholeness. And if a personal unity is the essence of Godhead, then the quest for communion between human beings becomes an essential aspect of the religious quest, since communion as an ontological category is the link between God and humanity and indeed God is the source of all communion, of ours with Him, and ours with each other.

Theology and Existentialism

Zizioulas and Schillebeeckx can be seen to be emphasising personal experience, direct contact with people and things. Zizioulas also emphasises the relational. It has not escaped some theologians that a philosophy of personal existence, so-called "existentialism", could be a useful and apt vessel for conveying Christian teaching to our generation. And some theologians have attempted this, with greater or lesser degrees of success. The relationship between theology and those philosophers loosely described as "existentialist" is problematic. But this should not deter us because faith is, after all, an existential attitude. Zizioulas has himself conceded that "a pneumatological approach inevitably brings forth the existential aspect of the Church" (Zizioulas J. p.89). Buber rejected the notion that rational conceptual frameworks give us access to concrete reality. They must be tested against existential experience (Zizioulas p.237 n. 89). It has already been observed that the encounter between individuals is an existential event. This is the foundation of Buber's I and Thou.

A difficulty arises because "Existential Philosophy", so-called, has always tended to be individualistic (starting with Kierkegaard), whereas we are analysing relations within the Body of Christ which are an existential experience, but lived relationships within

the community of the Church and beyond. Indeed the whole subject of Existentialism in relation to Theology is a difficult one, since so-called existentialist philosophers are so varied, but this should not deter theologians, because the results of the dialogue are so fruitful. This study is also germane to our theme because Buber has been substantially influenced by Existentialism. In a general sense one could say that they are those philosophers whose thinking stands in line with the thought of the Danish religious thinker Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). He said that there was no use amassing vast amounts of knowledge just for the sake of it. The purpose of life was to perceive the truth, to enter into oneself and exist. Kierkegaard's notion of existence did not yet carry the full weight of meaning attached to it by modern existential philosophy, but it was not far off. By existence he meant the uniqueness of the personal self and its decisions. A second key idea was that man needed courage to take an existential jump into paradox. If theories and ideas are no use in pointing out our way, only the jump remains. This implies freedom, dread and nothingness. Closely connected with the idea of paradox was faith. Kierkegaard developed an idea of faith as an obedience to God demanding the suspension of human reason. A paradox is not only something hard to understand, but humanly speaking something not understandable at all. He rejected Hegel's rationalisation of religion, which turned religion into philosophy and so, in Kierkegaard's opinion, abolished it altogether.

The existentialist line may be seen as a rebellion against Descartes and the general direction of western philosophy with its objective exploration of "beings-in-general". Indeed on these two grounds Kierkegaard found himself opposed to Hegel, the supreme rationalist. The Existential heirs of Kierkegaard held that western philosophy has tended to ignore reality and the problematical nature of truly personal existence.

They have highlighted the error of Descartes who attempted to understand human beings by those categories applicable to non-human being. In contrast to this there was a stress on subjectivity - Kierkegaard's celebrated aphorism "Truth is subjectivity". Subjectivity gives ontological but not ontic descriptions. Much has been made of the statement that the existentialist philosophers' teaching can be summed up in the statement "existence precedes essence". But it would be more accurate to say that man's essential nature is one from which, in his actual existence he is separated, one that as yet lies before him, yet to be laid hold of, grasped or realised. Closely linked with these claims is the concept which we might describe as "fallenness"; empirical human existence is estranged from its true, genuine or authentic modes. In varying ways all the existentialist philosophers describe a similar reality. Heidegger speaks of inauthentic existence, Karl Jaspers (1883-1973) (in *Etre et Avoir*, Paris, Editions Montaigne, 1935) speaks of man's immersion of himself in the world of objectifiable things, an immersion which separates Man from transcendent life. Gabriel Marcel (b. 1889) speaks of man's overindulgence in the attitudes and activity of egocentric "having", at the expense of the mutual, reciprocal, communal activity of "being". Buber speaks of man sinking himself in the world of 'It', the world of objects, ideas and instruments, thus cutting himself off from the maturation of his personal being which is possible only in 'I-Thou' relationships.

Thus we can see in the so-called existentialist philosophers and kindred spirits an emphasis on personal experience. Heidegger has often been described as an existentialist, although his real concern was with being rather than existence, but he is linked to the existentialists with the stress on subjectivity. What is important is that these philosophers are universally critical of much in our modern and contemporary

civilisation and culture. As has been stated the relationship between existentialism and theology is complicated, for example in Tillich and Bultmann. In defence of the relationship it can be asserted that theology cannot be done in a vacuum, and that a philosophy of personal existence may be a more apt vessel for conveying the meaning of Christian doctrines. The Christian revelation consists in God's mighty acts in Jesus Christ, and so its truth is not the truth of a statement but the truth of a person. The truth it gives us is an existential understanding. Faith is the answer to the kerygma as we enter into a new understanding of self. But the danger here is that the concept of christian existence can be taken over by existentialist philosophy without any reference to its origin in the cross and resurrection of Christ and Christian theology could disappear as such. John Macquarrie (in An Existentialist Theology, London, Penguin, 1973, originally published in 1955. See also Macquarrie J., Martin Heidegger, London, Lutterworth Press, 1968) states, for example, in relation to Rudolf Bultmann that there is a danger of emphasising only those elements of Christian truth which best fit in with existentialism. The truths of faith can be seen to have to some extent been "taken over" by existentialist philosophy without reference to the mighty acts of God. These latter are God's acts, they are transcendent and not statements about simply or merely human existence.

There is an illuminating review of Macquarrie's book by James Brown (Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 9, Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd, 1956 pp. 305-316), He makes the observation that Macquarrie is among those who conceive that certain disturbing features in Bultmann's reductive treatment of Christian origins are more the result of his remaining Liberalism than of his existentialism. This needs to

be assessed along with the earlier remarks concerning Bultmann's reductionism.

Brown says of Macquarrie:

"He appears to find Bultmann's approach illuminating, to the extent of suggesting a hope of healing the breach between religious thought on the one hand and scientific and philosophical thought on the other. ... It is a corrected and supplemented existentialist theology which offers this hope, one which gives due place to biblical belief in God and His saving Word in the Gospel " (op.cit.p.307).

In An Existentialist Theology Macquarrie sets forth a relationship at two levels: there is a formal affinity between the categories of Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of human being or existence and the biblical representation of the relations between man and God; and there is a material resemblance in the account both give of the human situation. Bultmann believes that Heidegger's phenomenological description of the nature of human being is sufficiently sound to render it necessary prolegomena to biblical studies; in particular, "Being-in-the-world", "Dasein", involves humankind in a fundamental "being-with" both things and persons, of a sort which renders description of either impossible without reference to the other.

Bultmann does not so much say that this new a priori of human knowledge must of necessity be used in our approach to the biblical statements about God and man as that we already find acknowledged there some such doctrine of the "togetherness" of knower and known implicit in biblical thinking - it is already existentialist thinking. The Bible is not speculative doctrine concerning objective realities determinable by science or philosophy: it is description of experience of God and man in living relation not otherwise known or knowable outside existentialist participation. Theology is

phenomenological analysis and description. In particular the question of whether this approach can ever transcend its anthropological starting point, is a matter less acutely raised in Bultmann than in Tillich, whose constructions are similarly dominated by existentialist presuppositions.

This question is highlighted in an interesting work of dialogue: Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought, (Eds. O'Meara T. A. & Weisser C. D., London, Darton Longman and Todd, 1965). Tillich emphasises man's existential state as one of finitude, connected as it is with the tension between humankind's present state and what it is essentially and therefore ought to be. (See Kimball R. C. Ed. Theology of Culture, New York, Oxford University Press, 1959, p.102). In the moment of utter separation and despair, because of this finitude, can come the experience of the paradoxical presence of the ultimate. This is expressed well by George Tavard (Christ as the Answer to Existential Anguish in Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought, p.227):

"Existential anguish is the wedge which forces our self-satisfied, complacent universe to break and make room for the one solution to the conundrum of existence, the remedy to the disease of the universe, the one who heals the discrepancy between being and being - Jesus the Christ."

Thus through a sensitive analysis of personal human existence in all its paradoxes, both theologians, one Protestant, one Catholic, arrive at a similar point: that out of despair comes hope, the hope which is the power of God.

But a problem arises when we consider the theological understanding of Jesus Christ. Like Bultmann Tillich is nineteenth century enough to be concerned with that most nineteenth century of theological problems, the historicity of the Gospels. He decides

against the possibility of establishing this historicity, so has to establish a new, unhistorical understanding of Jesus. For Tillich the picture of Jesus in the New Testament is that of the new creation, "New Being" - the pivotal concept of Tillich's system:

"Jesus of Nazareth is the medium of the final revelation because he sacrifices completely to Jesus as the Christ " (Systematic Theology Vol. 1, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951, p.136).

In the Christ is an uninterrupted transparency to the ground of being so that all separation is overcome. Tillich's transformation of the sinful man, Jesus, to the exemplar, Christ, links him to Adoptionism. He appears to reject the supernatural and to equate God with a basic energy at work in the universe, but interpreted in terms of human concern. Transcendental existence is called God, the ultimate objective formulation of my felt compulsion to exist, what Gustave Weigel (*The Theological Significance of Paul Tillich* in O'Meara T. A. & Weisser C. D. Eds. Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965, p.227) describes as an "acosmic pantheism touchingly expressed in terms of misery and hope".

This is a good example of the attempts of theologians to work from an existentialist standpoint, emphasising the elements of Christianity which best "interface" with existential philosophy, while completely ignoring others which do not. Rather than adopt this methodology, those wishing to elaborate an existentialist theology might do better to focus on the hypostatic nature of God and draw their theology out of this rich vein of a relational understanding, as Zizioulas does. He establishes the important link between the hypostatic nature of God and the hypostatic nature of man made possible by God whereas Tillich, in common with many theologians of the Reformed tradition,

maximises the rupture between God and man. This can be seen as itself part and parcel of the Western emphasis upon the "autonomous subject". With this emphasis upon distance from God it is difficult to see how people are themselves reconciled with one another in the Church. In the Orthodox tradition the Church is conceived as a real communion in faith and love among persons, based upon the communion, encounter or dialogue with God established through the Son's having taken our flesh. In this understanding it would be possible to say that the goal of the Christian life is the New Being in Jesus as the Christ, but this would mean the supernatural, divine life acquired by incorporation into Christ, the Risen Lord, the Mystical Body, from whom energy and life descend with the Holy Spirit from the Father to quicken the members with new life, so that each member can say very literally;

"It is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me " (Galatians 2 20).

This experience indeed gives us a new existential understanding of self, indeed a new "mode of existence" which Zizioulas calls, as we have previously observed, "the hypostasis of ecclesial existence".

Bultman, as well as Tillich, has focused on the idea of this experience of anxiety. In this they have been strongly influenced by the Existentialists. But this phenomenon was already alluded to by Kierkegaard in a very telling passage:

"One may liken dread to dizziness. He whose eye chances to look down into the yawning abyss becomes dizzy ... Thus dread is the dizziness of freedom, which occurs when freedom gazes down into its own possibility " (The Concept of Dread, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1960 p.55).

It is interesting that for Kierkegaard anxiety is primarily associated with freedom, though admittedly with freedom conditioned by finitude. In anxiety humankind is confronted with its possibility and its responsibility. In Heidegger's analysis of anxiety, the emphasis has shifted somewhat. This shift is from the possibility to the facticity of human existence, which he regards as the primary disclosure of anxiety. It discloses humanity as "being-there", possibility thrown into the world. Once again we perceive Heidegger's influence on Rahner in the passage quoted above from Hearers of the Word. There would be no flight from freedom if freedom were unlimited, but freedom is always tied down and circumscribed by the alien being of the world. In the mood of anxiety man is disclosed to himself as responsible for an existence of which he can never be the master.

It is here that the teaching of existentialism appears to approach to that of the New Testament. Man's being is such that he cannot find contentment in the world, and a fundamental uneasiness arises out of the very constitution of his being and breaks in to disclose to him that he is not at home, that the world is uncanny (unheimlich, in Heidegger's expression), and can be hostile:

"It is no accident," remarks Heidegger, "that the phenomena of anxiety and fear - which are generally left undistinguished from one another - have come within the orbit of Christian theology.... That has happened whenever the anthropological problem of the being of man in relation to God gained a precedence, and guided the treatment of phenomena such as faith, sin, love and repentance " (Sein und Zeit, Tübingen, 1927 p. 190).

If Heidegger can say it is "no accident" it seems he is implying that the whole concept demands a religious interpretation. I think it is important here to realise that Heidegger's emphasis is upon an existential and phenomenological analysis of anxiety and fear. And although he raises the whole issue, Macquarrie (An Existentialist Theology, London, Penguin, 1973 p.70) asserts that he fails to come to grips with the fact that in connection with the transition to an authentic existence the problem of God is raised. So Macquarrie concludes (ibid):

"We must not make too much of religious tendencies in Heidegger's thought, just as we must not label it as atheistic. The religious tendencies are undoubtedly there, but I cannot find that they ever take any very definite shape."

If Heidegger fails to come to grips with the problem of God in relation to authentic existence this only confirms Zizioulas' judgement (See Zizioulas J. p. 42) that the subject of the authentic person can only be treated in relation to the "uncreated". If God does not exist person does not exist, and if absolute freedom is only possible through suicide, then freedom leads to nihilism. Authentic personhood can only be affirmed by a personal God, whose freedom lies in His personal existence. As Father, he freely wills the communion with the Son in the Spirit.²⁸ Zizioulas observes:

"If this is so, it is evident that the only exercise of freedom in an ontological manner is love. 'God is love' (1 John 4 16) not as a property of the divine, but as constitutive of His substance. Thus love

²⁸ Zizioulas has an interesting footnote (op. cit, p. 44 No. 40) on the use of ekstasis in the philosophy of M. Heidegger. He acknowledges that Heidegger represents "an important stage in the progress of Western thought, especially in the liberation of ontology from an 'ontism' and from philosophical rationalism, though not in fact from the concept of consciousness and of the subject." One should perhaps bear in mind here the distinction between Heidegger the ontologist and Heidegger the existentialist.

ceases to be a qualifying - i.e. secondary- property of being and becomes the supreme ontological predicate " (op.cit.p.46).

One can hear an echo of the above in Buber, as he recoils from the nihilism of Nietzsche. In his early years in Vienna, he had adopted the Nietzschean line of the death of old values, the lack of any spiritual reference point in the modern world. As Buber made clear in an essay previously referred to ("Alte und Neue Gemeinschaft" p. 95) ^{that} he recoiled from the influence of Nietzsche precisely because he was deeply convinced of life's ultimate meaningfulness; and one of the major reasons why he was convinced of this was because he believed in the necessity of communion between persons based on their divine origin. Indeed he wilfully misinterprets the Lurianic myth of the broken vessels precisely to make this point. Or put conversely, the disconnectedness between human beings, an aspect of alienation, stemmed, in Buber's thinking, from humankind's alienation from the divine and was causally connected. Although, as it were, starting from the human rather than the divine side, Buber appears to be making a not dissimilar point to Zizioulas. In Buber the impetus appears to be from the human to the divine:

"The extended lines of relations meet in the eternal Thou ... The inborn Thou is consummated only in direct relation with the Thou that by its nature cannot become It " (Buber M. I & Thou, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1987, p.99).

Whereas with Zizioulas the impetus is from the divine to the human, "love becomes the supreme ontological predicate" (Zizioulas J. p.46):

"Love is not an emanation or 'property' of the substance of God ... but is constitutive of His substance, i.e. it is that which makes God what He is, the one God."

While not claiming too much for the above, there does seem to be a certain congruence in these ideas. Indeed it might be possible to suggest that it is a very similar insight to say that God is the "Thou that by its nature cannot become it" and that "the ontology of God is not subject to the necessity of the substance." In both cases "love is identified with ontological freedom," and the emphasis in both these ideas seems to be on relation. The "Eternal Thou" of which Buber speaks is not a symbol for God but for our relation to Him, which in love is free - "it cannot become it." Again it is because the Father loves, i.e. enters into relation with the Son in the Spirit and is ontologically free.

Buber would see the giving of a person's whole being to the Thou of his life as making a religious attitude, but not necessarily directed towards a God believed in. This seems quite reasonable as far as it goes and relates to Rahner's thinking concerning the supernatural Existential. This is brought out very well in the article previously referred to by B J Fair ("Martin Buber and some theologians of Encounter" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 21, Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd, 1968 p.31). In saying that even the "formal unbeliever", who has internalised human values and integrity, are "serving the absent God", Rahner appears to be agreeing with Buber that there can be genuine religion without belief in God as personal:

"The dialogue is possible with all aspects of being, and since in each Thou we address the eternal Thou." (ibid), and he adds "For Buber it is the giving of a man's whole being to the Thou of his life that makes an

attitude religious, not its being consciously directed towards a God believed in."

In The Eclipse of God (New York, Harper & Bros., 1952 p 40) Buber says, with reference to Buddha:

"It is not necessary to know something about God in order really to believe in Him: many true believers know how to talk to God but not about Him." Buber's argument here concerning the nature of the "Eternal Thou" seems to be along lines of convergence with Rahner's concerning the "Supernatural Existential."

If the "Eternal Thou" is the attitude of the giving of a person's life to the Thou of his life, then this is very similar to the permanent modification of the human spirit which transforms its natural dynamism into an ontological drive to God. As has been previously observed Edward Schillebeeckx also emphasises the relational in our experience of the divine (in Christ, the Christian Experience in the Modern World, London, SCM, 1980).

Most christian writers, including Zizioulas, would insist on certain media as necessary for this encounter. So Brunner:

"Man comes into an immediate relation with God; but this personal fellowship with God is only possible through the historical mediator and only within the fellowship of the Church " (Revelation and Reason, 1946 pp.147 ff., 409). "God comes to us in person in Jesus Christ, and only in this event is He our real Thou. Jesus Christ meets us in a unique existential encounter, which constitutes the event of salvation. The

historical revelation is the ground of our knowledge of God's personal Being " (op.cit.p.409).

Another consequence of the hypostatic 'existence' of God, according to Zizioulas, is that the person wants to possess an ontological content - to exist as a concrete, unique and unrepeatable entity. In other words the person refuses to be relativised, and this fact was recognised by Buber and others, for example by Jean-Paul Sartre. In L'Être et le Néant (Paris, Librairie Gallimand, 1943) Sartre puts forward a view of human existence not that dissimilar to Heidegger. The idea that consciousness is a nothingness, and the fundamental distinction between the pour soi and the en soi are both ideas taken from Heidegger. The 'for self', which is what consciousness consists in, is in effect Heidegger's Dasein. Consciousness involves consciousness of itself. It is nothing in the sense that it has no essence. Human beings, as conscious beings, can make themselves by their own free choice. It is the existence, as well as the inevitability, of free choice that is a cardinal element of Sartre's philosophy.

The emphasis upon absolute freedom and its inevitability is to be found in Sartre's first novel La Nausée. In it the hero, Roquentin, is constrained to recognise the absolute contingency of things (of the en soi) by contrast with his own completely free choice. Things have what Sartre calls 'facticity', and it is concluded from this that their existence is in a certain sense absurd. The absurdity of the world is simply a function of its brute contingency, and that produces nausea, what Heidegger called 'boredom'. It is necessary that one recognises one's own freedom in the face of this. One has, in a sense, to choose one's world.

One problem about this situation is that each individual person has to do the same. This has the inevitable effect that one manifestation of the pour soi will come into

conflict with another. Being for self comes into conflict with being for others. Zizioulas attends to this reality and comments ("Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.425-426):

"For the inability of human personhood to be ekstatic towards what is outside creation and thus to unite nature in personhood, leads to the fragmentation of nature and hence to an *individualisation* of beings: each being acquires its identity not through the hypostatic differentiation which emerges from communion, but through its affirmation *in contrast and opposition* to the other beings.

Difference becomes division and person becomes individual, i.e. an entity affirmed by way of contrast to, rather than of, communion with other entities. Thus 'the other' becomes an existential contrast to one's self, 'my hell' and 'my original sin' (Sartre). Human nature becomes through procreation individualised, by bringing forth beings as individuals; its ekstatic movement does not produce diversity *in unity*, but *in division*. Fragmentation and individualisation is the price that nature pays for man's introversion. It is also the very basis of death."

In a judgement almost identical to Buber's conception of the instrumental I-It relationship, Sartre asserts that a person must inevitably try to turn the other into what is for him or her an example of the en soi, a thing. Inevitably one is led to the conclusion that Sartre's outlook is gloomy in the extreme and ignores so much that is positive in human relationships. While emphasising freedom, his outlook makes it impossible for him to recognise the possibility of the I-Thou relationship, the possibility

of dialogue and above all the possibility of a real ontological connection between freedom and love.

Zizioulas is well aware of this theme in Sartre of the conflict of the *pour soi* with others. He recognises that two things, particularity and communion, are in apparent conflict:

"Being a person is fundamentally different from being an individual or a 'personality', for a person cannot be imagined in himself but only within his relationships " (Zizioulas J p.105).²⁹

It is in the patristic perspective that Zizioulas is able to see the resolution of this apparent conflict since the essential thing about a person lies in his being a revelation of truth, not as "substance" or "nature" but as a "mode of existence" (Zizioulas J. p.

²⁹ He elaborates this theme elsewhere, using an example offered by Sartre for a different purpose:

"When I have an appointment in a cafe with a friend whose existence matters to me, and on my arrival there I discover that this person is not there, the absent person **precisely by not being there** occupies for me the entire space-time context of the cafe. It is only **after** I reflect consciously on the situation that I realise empirically who 'is' and who 'is not' there. But as I do that a significant distinction emerges between the presence of personal and the presence of a-personal beings.

After my conscious reflection on the situation those who 'are' and those who 'are not' there are not **particular** beings in a personal sense: their identities are established not in communion and freedom but by their own boundaries (as a realist would say) or through those imposed by our own minds (as an idealist would say). Their presence is compelling for our minds and senses but not for our freedom; they can be turned into things, they can lose their uniqueness and finally dispensed with. (Those who 'are' in the cafe 'are' - from the point of view of personhood - in the same sense that the chairs 'are' there.) The presence, therefore, of a-personal beings is ultimately demonstrable through mind or sense perception (which allows for them being described, conceived, and finally manipulated or even dispensed with), whereas the presence of persons is ultimately demonstrable through love and freedom." ("Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.413)

In a footnote he quotes W. Pannenberg for expressing this idea particularly clearly:

'Human beings are persons by the very fact that they are not wholly and completely existent for us in their reality, but are characterised by freedom and as a result remain concealed and beyond control in the totality of their existence. A person whose being we could survey and whose every moment we could anticipate would thereby cease to be a person for us, and where human beings are falsely taken to be existent beings and treated as such, then their personality is treated with contempt. This is unfortunately possible, because human beings are in fact also existent beings. Their being as persons take shape in their present bodily reality, and yet it remains invisible to one whose vision - unlike the vision of love or even that of hatred - looks only at what is existent in man.' (Basic Questions in Theology, Vol III, 1973 p.112).

106). True knowledge is not knowledge of essence or nature, but of how they are connected in the communion-event, in existential encounter.

Particularity and communion are not in contradiction but coincide:

"Truth as communion does not lead to the dissolving of the diversity of beings into one vast ocean of being, but to the affirmation of otherness in and through love. The difference between this truth and that of 'nature in itself' lies in the following: while the latter is subject to fragmentation, individualisation, conceptualisation, comprehension, etc., the person is not" (ibid).

One observes again precisely Buber's existential distinction between I-It, involving an analytic and instrumentalist inner dynamism and I-Thou, the person in dialogue or communion.

Zizioulas concludes that:

"This identification of otherness with unity is incompatible with fallen existence, into which we are born as individuals with a clear tendency to seize, dominate and possess being. This individualised and individualising Adam in us is our original sin, and because of it the 'other', i.e. beings existing outside ourselves" (Sartre's "les autres") "becomes our enemy and 'our original sin' (Note 103, Sartre J-P, L'Etre at Le Neant, p.251). A human being left to himself cannot be a person. And the ekstasis of beings towards humanity or towards creation alone leads to 'being-into-death' " (op.cit.p.107).

Sartre is successful, however, in his account of 'bad faith', the avoidance of free choice by persons. This is perhaps a version of Heidegger's 'inauthenticity' but it is described

in more recognisable terms, by reference to examples, undoubtedly drawn from Sartre's cafe-frequenting world, of the behaviour of such people as a waiter or a girl on the receiving end of a possible seduction. Bad faith is a form of self-deception, which seems doomed to failure. And self-deception seems to imply some form of dissociation from oneself. Or perhaps this could be called alienation from oneself and others. Zizioulas makes this point himself, he says:

"Since the 'other' becomes a threat to 'myself' (Sartre) in a fallen state of existence in which difference becomes division, 'myself' needs to be protected from the 'intruder' of my individuality. Hypocrisy serves as a perverted way out, when the ekstasis of personhood drives us towards communion as the event of truth " ("Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.427).

Alienation, Personhood and Community

It was indicated earlier that it would be necessary to look at the notion of alienation in order to understand the positive and negative links between Zizioulas and Buber and others. One of the great problems in reviewing the concept of alienation or 'fallenness' is the vast range of understanding which is evident and then relating these various ideas to theology. Perhaps it is wiser to maintain that what is evidenced by the range of ideas from the personal and individual level through to the wider historical level is a deep dis-ease in human existence, whether finding expression in personal angst or disfunction in political and economic institutions. Between these two we see a whole range of concepts, but all acknowledging that empirical human existence is estranged

from its true genuine or authentic modes. We have previously observed that Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Jaspers and Marcel all refer to this, while Buber draws together many of these strands, and this perspective of Buber's relates to Zizioulas' theological perspective, his description of the "hypostasis of biological existence".

L. J. Silberstein (in Martin Buber's Social and Religious Thought, New York, New York University Press, 1989) considers that the 'remedy' for alienation was the principal organising idea for all Buber's work. In this respect Buber is not far removed from Zizioulas, who contrasts the two hypostases, of biological and ecclesial existence, the former being that of our fallen state - a state of alienation from God and other human beings. This is an important point of convergence between them and should not be underestimated.

Buber's main work as the philosopher of dialogue grows out of an awareness of the crisis of human existence. In this context he tends towards a middle path between existentialist individualism and the communalism of the social thinkers, between a Kierkegaard or a Sartre or a Marx, a Weber and others. In the description of the human predicament it is as if both aspects are different sides of the same coin. But to be fair to the social thinkers there is contained in many of their theories, the personal and existential component. In Capital (1867) Marx describes commodities, and above all money, gaining a life of their own. Use-value (the value given to something because of the role that it has in relation to human beings) becomes exchange value. If this is conceived in terms of the idea that something of the human being is objectified in such objects, the notion of alienation becomes clear; something of what is really human becomes separated from that human being. Moreover, he thinks that in this form of alienation men become alienated from each other; and they become means for

each other, because they too become property to be bought and sold. Marx assumed the misery of the human condition, describes what he saw as the economic basis of the problem and proposed plans for changing it. He refrains from an introspective existential-type analysis of the human situation because he complained (in Theses on Feuerbach (1845)) that philosophers have spent too much time interpreting the world whereas the point was to change it, a sentiment echoed by Buber and not lost on Zizioulas.

Buber has achieved considerable success in formulating the concepts through which to carry out a sustained critique of these alienating conditions. Silberstein (p 104) says:

"Increasingly he came to see that these alienating modes of interaction are grounded in a mistaken concept of personhood. This flawed vision was, in turn, rooted in and helped to sustain the dominant alienating modes of discourse that prevailed in modern life. If modern individuals were to be effectively awakened to the conditions of their existence, the conceptual, discursive and social processes that engender alienation would have to be unmasked."

The approach of I and Thou is, in many ways, a new form of philosophical discourse, resembling poetic meditation rather than rational, critical discourse. Like the existentialists Buber rejects all essentialist claims, endorsing the 'existentialist' intuition that redescribing ourselves is the most important thing we can do. This activity is not constructive in the sense of normal, systematic research:

"Edifying discourse is supposed to be abnormal, to take us out of our old selves by the power of strangeness, to aid us in becoming new

human beings " ((Rorty R. Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1979, p.369).

Another way of understanding this might be to say that Buber's approach is parabolic. It is most illuminating to our purpose that Rorty highlights the religious quality of Buber's writings, in terms of transformation of thinking and the making of wholly new modes of behaviour. In a sense Buber employs the same style of parabolic discourse as Jesus Christ, as recorded in the Gospels. Buber uses his writings to suggest a way out of the alienating situation of modern life. His description of humankind's situation borrows from many, but is his own unique creation. In Daniel - Dialogues on Realization, (Ed. Friedman M, New York, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1964)³⁰ persons experience anxiety, becoming increasingly aware of the surrounding chaos and the ever-present abysses "between thing and thing, between image and seeing, between the world and me " (op.cit.p.86).³¹ As a result people seek security in the scientific, rationalistic world view. But this world/view merely reinforces the isolation the person feels, because the rational and scientific has no room for the intuitive and the inter-personal:

³⁰ The resemblance between Buber's Daniel and Nietzsche's Thus spoke Zarathustra is very evident. In several ways, Daniel evokes images of Zarathustra. Like Nietzsche Buber couched his argument as a series of conversations, thereby utilizing indirect, quasi-poetic discourse. Also Daniel, like Zarathustra, first appears to us as he descends from the mountain in order to go out among people. Moreover, like Nietzsche's work, Daniel criticizes the prevailing rationalistic, instrumentalist mode of thought for its stifling effect upon the individual and society.

³¹ In "Metropolis" (in Simmel G. The Conflict in Modern Culture and Other Essays, New York, Teachers College Press, 1968) Georg Simmel used the metaphor of an individual who, upon arriving in a new city, sought vainly to orient himself through abstract categories. Similarly Ludwig Wittgenstein (Philosophical Investigations 3rd Ed. New York, Macmillan, 1958, 8e, para.18) spoke of philosophizing as analogous to finding one's way out of a maze: "Our language can be seen as an ancient city, a maze of little streets and squares etc." and "What is your aim in philosophy? - To show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle." (ibid, 103e, para. 309).

"Their limitation is so closely cut to the body that they are glad and proud of it, and call it by elegant names, such as culture, or religion, or progress, or tradition, or intellectuality: ah, the unreal has a thousand masks " (op.cit,p.87).

In Daniel, Buber took an important step towards clarifying his vision of alienation. The root cause of this alienation is the instrumental ethos. Buber introduced an alternative mode, actualisation.

The actualising person does not seek to order experiences into rational systems, but embraces life in all its immediate fullness. It may seem to be that Buber is conceiving of the alternative to alienation in terms of a mystical vision of unity, whereas he insists in Daniel that genuine life is only achieved through the immediacy of human relationships. Buber emphasises active engagement with the world as the path to this unity:

"Every true deed is a loving deed. All the true deeds arise from contact with a beloved thing and flow into the universe ... Unity is not a property of this world, but its task. To form unity out of the world is our never ending work " Friedman M. Ed. Pointing the Way - Collected Essays, New York, Harper, 1949, p.30).

But it was the experience of the First World War that crystallised and finalised Buber's shift from an individualistic-existentialist framework to a social-interactional framework. In an essay The Holy Way, first delivered in 1918, he says:

"The Divine may come to life in an individual man, may reveal itself from within individual man; but it attains its earthly fullness only where, having awakened to an awareness of their universal being, individual

beings open themselves to one another, disclose themselves to one another, help one another; where the sublime stronghold of the individual is unbolted, and man breaks free to meet other (sic) man.

Where this takes place, where the eternal arises in the Between (im Dazwischen), the seemingly empty space; that true place of actualisation is community, and true community is that relationship in which the Divine comes to its actualisation between man and man "

(Buber M. On Judaism, Ed. Glatzer N, New York, Schocken, 1967, p. 110).

Buber acknowledges that a return to premodern social forms is impossible, so he advocated a new organic model of community, based on belief in the total connectedness and relatedness of all existing beings. In the new community, this cosmic connectedness was to find its social actualisation through helping relationships. These were first mentioned in The Legends of the Baal Shem (New York, Schocken, 1969); relationships that enable us to grow in self-discovery and self-awareness and to become, like God, creators; we help others to draw out and actualise their own innate predispositions. The concept of human beings as creators was a significant factor in Buber's early attraction to Hasidism (See Buber M. "My Way to Hasidism" in Hasidism and Modern Man, New York, Horizon, 1958, pp,47-69).

This idea of creating is also present in Zizioulas, and in the similar context of Personhood and its depersonalisation in technological culture. He makes the point that human personhood is never satisfied with itself until it becomes in this respect an "imago Dei":

"We can see this by considering one of the most important capacities of human personhood, namely **creating**: man is capable of creating, of bringing things into being. When we employ the terms 'creation', 'creating' or 'creativity' in relation to personhood, we must not have in mind the idea of 'manufacturing' with which we usually associate man's ability to be a creator. When we say that man is capable of creating **by being a person**, we imply something entirely different, and that has to do with a double possibility which this kind of creation opens up. On the one hand, 'things' or the world around acquire a 'presence' as an integral and relevant part of the totality of existence, and on the other hand man himself becomes 'present' as a unique and unrepeatable hypostasis of being and not as an impersonal number in a combined structure. In other words, in this way of understanding creating, the movement is from thinghood to personhood and not the other way round. This is, for example, what happens in the case of a work of real art as contrasted to a machine. When we look at a painting or listen to music we have in front of us 'the beginning of a world', a 'presence' in which 'things' and substances (cloth, oil, etc.) or qualities (shape, colour, etc.) or sounds become part of a personal presence. And this is entirely the achievement of Personhood, a distinctly unique capacity of man, which, unlike other technological achievements, is not threatened by the emerging intelligent beings of computer science. The term 'creativity' is significantly applied to Art **par excellence**, though we seldom appreciate the real implications of this for theology and

anthropology " ("Human Capacity and Human Incapacity" in Torrance

T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28,

Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 pp.411-412).

In I and Thou Buber used artistic creation as a paradigm for our relations to the world and to other persons. The concept of entelechy, basic to Buber's conception of person, was also important to his discussion of artistic creativity. In inter-human relations, we draw out and actualise the unique qualities of the other through relation. In the act of artistic creation, we seek to draw out and actualise the reality inherent in nature and in the inanimate world. Art is neither an expression of human consciousness nor an imprint of the outer world, but rather an event of relation:

"The creation of a work of art is a relational event which takes place

between two entities that have gone apart from one another " (Buber

M. The Knowledge of Man - Selected Essays, New York, Harper &

Row, 1966 p.66).

Like knowledge, love and faith, art is, according to Buber, a means of overcoming our alienation from the world. Through art, we transcend the sphere of the useful and "experience and actualise the perfection of the relation to the substratum of the sense things: through the figuration in the vision and in the work " (op.cit.p.164).

Buber and Zizioulas are able to see in society that it is the human propensity to view others as commodities as "Its", albeit sporadically interrupted by "cursory vistas of love, friendship, comradeship, fleeting revelations of the Thou" (Buber M. A Believing Humanism - My Testament, 1902-1965, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1967, p.99).

But these fleeting moments are quickly replaced by periods of loneliness and alienation

that characterise modern society. It was in I and Thou that Buber set forth his alternative way of relating to others :

"Not your It, but your Thou is what is essential, though not surveyable " (op.cit,p.100).

If the "Thou is what is essential" then we are not far from Zizioulas' person who wants to possess an ontological content, to exist as a concrete, unique and unrepeatable entity. With Buber, Sartre and others, he is asserting that the person refuses to be relativised, to be relegated to an 'It'. Zizioulas asserts (Zizioulas J p.47):

"Uniqueness is something absolute for the person. The person is so absolute in its uniqueness that it does not permit itself to be regarded as an arithmetical concept, to be set alongside other beings, to be continued with other objects, or to be used as a means, even for the most sacred goal."

And in the phrase "even for the most sacred goal" (ibid) we hear echoes of Kierkegaard. "Christendom" was used by him as a term of abuse because it subordinated the faith of individual believers to an institution; it relativised their faith and subordinated it to the demands of being a Church member. The famous Attack upon Christendom (1854-55) was a formal repudiation of the institutional Church (epitomised for him in the Lutheran Danish State Church).

Zizioulas comments on this theme of the relativisation of the person (Zizioulas J. p.47):

"Diffused today throughout all forms of social life is the intense search for personal identity. The person is not relativised without provoking a reaction."

Combined with the instrumentalist orientation of industrial and technological society, described by Marx and numerous other social thinkers, we see in this the cause of humankind's alienation from itself.

Zizioulas goes on to state that humankind's inability to ensure his or her absolute identity in the world culminates in death, and he comments that:

"Death becomes tragic and unacceptable only when man is regarded as person, and above all as hypostasis and unique identity " (ibid),

whereas in the natural world death is something natural, and the moment in which life is perpetuated through children. But this is a survival of the species and not of persons, and of the concrete and unique identity.

Buber similarly observes that the human being wishes to have a concrete, unique and unrepeatable identity:

"Only in his own way and not in any other can the one who strives perfect himself " (Buber M. The Legends of the Baal Shem, New York, Schocken, 1969 p.42);

"In each man there is a priceless treasure that is in no other " (ibid).

Zizioulas maintains that:

"Death for a person means ceasing to love and to be loved, ceasing to be unique and unrepeatable, whereas life for the person means the survival of the uniqueness of its hypostasis, which is affirmed and maintained by love " (Zizioulas J p.49).

Buber recognises also the inadequacy of the humanistic perspective. He believed that each person is responsible for helping others to cultivate and actualise their own uniqueness, but he also taught that love exists not only within the individual but also

"exists in reality between the creatures, that is, it exists in God " (The Legends of the Baal Shem, New York, Schocken, 1969 p. 47). Buber cannot conceive of human beings in relation, without the relationship with God. This is a significant link with Zizioulas, albeit that the latter is able to give this far greater definition within the christian economy because by contrast the "hypostasis of ecclesial existence" is precisely an escape from the biological hypostasis through the new birth of baptism, the adoption of man by God, the identification of his hypostasis with the hypostasis of the Son of God, which itself follows from the identification of the passion of Christ with the hypostasis of the Son of the Holy Trinity and the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ.

But this new hypostasis does not mean that human beings cease to be born and to die in accordance with their biological hypostases, rather a paradoxical relationship between the two hypostases is created, whereby the ecclesial identity is linked with eschatology, with the final outcome of the person's existence. By contrast, and it is a major and substantial one, the concept of eschatology as such is lacking in Buber. Although the Lurianic myth is messianic, Hasidism, interpreting redemption as an inner, spiritual process rather than a historical one, neutralises the eschatological and catastrophic elements of the Lurianic myth.

In commenting upon the eschatological dimension, Zizioulas notes:

"This consideration of the human person from the point of view of a telos must not be interpreted with the help of an Aristotelian entelechy, that is, with the help of a potentiality existing in man's nature which enables him to become something better and more perfect than that which he is now " (op.cit.p.59).

And he adds in a footnote (ibid No 57):

"Herein also lies a fundamental distinction between Christianity and Marxism."

He might also have broadened this by saying that herein lies a fundamental distinction between Christianity and humanism. It is interesting to note here that Buber's interpretation of human existence apparently presupposes the notion of *entelechy* so might appear to disagree with Zizioulas' sentiments. For Buber *entelechy* means that life is a dynamic process in which we grow from what we actually are at a given moment to what we are meant to become. The idea of becoming is basic to his view. A person is never simply what he is at any given moment. We must always view others in terms of that which we are capable of becoming. This is indicated by his extensive use of the term *Verwirklichung* (actualisation). Whether talking of individuals or communities, Buber assumed the existence of inherent, primal forces that yearned to be actualized.³² (See Buber M. The Knowledge of Man -Selected Essays, Ed. Friedman M. New York, Harper and Row, 1967 pp.84-85) He gives expression to this yearning in I and Thou (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1987, p.43):

"In the beginning is relation - as category of being, readiness, grasping form, mould for the soul; it is the a priori of relation, the inborn Thou."

Buber subsequently expressed his regret over this choice of words which immediately call to mind the opening verse of Genesis and the Gospel of John. As he later explained (See Schilpp P. & Friedman M. Eds. The Philosophy of Martin Buber, Library of Living Philosophers, La Salle, Illinois, Open Court, 1967, p. 706), it was

³² (See the Introduction to Nietzsche F. Ecce Homo, London, Penguin, 1979, pp.14-15); a point similarly emphasized by Kierkegaard (See Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press, 1941, pp.182 ff).

never his intention to assert the temporal priority of relation, but simply to prioritise the steps essential to human becoming. The above hardly seems to amount to Aristotle's conception of entelechy.

Actualising our potential likewise hardly seems to conflict with orthodox christian teaching. However, in contrast to these Buber insisted that one actualises oneself through relations to others (Beziehung):

"And now I not only accept the other as he is, but I confirm him, in myself, and then in him, in relation to this potentiality that is meant by him and it can now be developed, it can evolve, it can answer the reality of life " (Buber M. The Knowledge of Man - Selected Essays, Ed.

Friedman M, New York, Harper and Row, 1967, p.182)

Although one can fully appreciate what Zizioulas is saying in respect of Aristotelian entelechy based on biological or historical evolution, namely that this is fundamentally different from the conversion and rebirth through baptism of persons into the Church, nonetheless Buber's concept of entelechy is very different from Aristotle's, Marx's or Darwin's. Buber's conception is based, not on the "actualising" of the autonomous subject, with all the attendant problems we have previously observed, but on the actualisation of our authentic personhood through dialogue with others. Buber is emphatic that a state of dialogue cannot be a permanent state, the result of some evolutionary process, whether biological or historical. He does not teach that the I-Thou relation is a state of being that once achieved endures, because every I-Thou relation necessarily reverts to an I-It relationship. Furthermore, Buber also emphasises that an I-Thou relationship cannot be planned and depends upon what he describes as grace:

"The Thou meets me through grace - it is not found by seeking "

(Buber M. I and Thou, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1987, p. 44).

It would be going too far to see in this statement anything approaching a conception of God's Spirit working in human beings, but there is a suggestion of something beyond the immanent nonetheless. In conceiving of actualisation as related to interpersonal relations and dialogue Buber is placing a similar emphasis to Zizioulas on personhood. In respect of Aristotle's entelechy the impetus is from within the human being in an autonomous way. This is not so with Buber, since the very notion of dialogue is opposed to autonomy, and furthermore, in discussing community, Buber makes it quite clear that he sees the development of community being essentially related to a common centre, a faith-event such as the Exodus or God, the Eternal Thou. Indeed he emphasises that spatial proximity, shared feelings or common interests are not the essential elements of community (op.cit.p.64), rather he argues that a group of people among whom I-Thou relations have been established does not yet constitute a community. One suspects that, in fact, this runs counter to much "common-sense" understanding of what constitutes a community, so often viewed as a coming together of like-minded people or mere physical proximity. Indeed some Protestant ecclesiology can, at times, seem to define the Church as little more than a coming together of like-minded people. The history of "community development" is littered with examples of failed schemes and aspirations precisely as the result of this lack of understanding of what constitutes community.

It would be true to say that Buber, in emphasising entelechy, once again wilfully misreads its meaning. It seems that he is much more wanting to emphasise the dynamic process which is at work in human relationships, dialogue and community.

The dynamic element in Buber's conception of interpersonal relations and community cannot be stressed too highly. Community is not a static form or structure, but unstable, characterised by an ongoing ebb and flow in which direct relations are repeatedly actualised and deactualised. Community, therefore, is a concrete, existential situation, an event, "the moment's answer to the moment's question" (Buber M. A Believing Humanism - My Testament, 1902-1965, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1967, p.88).

It is as event that Zizioulas essentially conceives of the eucharist and this perspective forms a fascinating connection between Buber's conception of community and Zizioulas' conception of the eucharistic community:

"When it is understood in its correct and primitive sense ... the eucharist is first of all an assembly (synaxis), a community, a network of relations, in which man 'subsists' in a manner different from the biological as a member of a body " (Zizioulas J p 60).

This statement appears to contain a certain similarity to Buber's conception of community as a dynamic process. In describing the eucharist as an assembly, Zizioulas is assuring an inbuilt dynamism, a movement, and in describing it as a network of relations, he is emphasising this as an essential aspect of human relations, what Buber refers to as an ebb and flow:

"Assembly and movement are the two fundamental characteristics of the eucharist " (op.cit.p.61).

The eucharist is an assembly - a historical realisation and a movement towards realisation in the eschaton.

In respect of the inherent dynamism within relation Zizioulas appears to be saying very much the same thing in relation to eros, the tendency towards "an ecstatic transcendence of individuality" (op.cit.p.50). The body "leads to communion with others, stretching out a hand, creating language, speech, conversation, art, kissing" (op.cit.p.52). Where these two writers diverge at this point is in the solution to the problem of the inherent flaws in human nature.

As has been demonstrated Buber is aware of the fact that all I-Thou relations necessarily revert to I-It relations. The use of "necessarily" is important here because it emphasises the inherently flawed nature of the biological hypostasis. Buber's solution is essentially to change the context of relation by the creation of community with a reference to a common centre. This is all well and good as far as it goes, and indeed one must concede that Buber has gone a long way, much further than other humanistic philosophers and thinkers whose work we have reviewed. But he does not satisfactorily explore what the reference to a common centre entails in a detailed way. One suspects that in the context of his Jewish faith he has a clear notion for himself, but dilutes this somewhat through wanting to make his ideas acceptable to humanists. As a firm supporter of the Kibbutz movement, Buber was well aware of the diverse religious attitudes or lack of them of kibbutz members.

Zizioulas' answer is much more radical. Like Buber he believes we must "become" what we are not, but that this happens by a rebirth, not that eros must be abandoned, but:

"must be hypostasized according to the 'mode of existence' of the ecclesial hypostasis. The ascetic character of the person, derived as it is from the eucharistic form of the ecclesial hypostasis, expresses the

authentic person precisely when it does not deny eros and the body but hypostatizes them in an ecclesial manner. In accordance with what I have said so far, in practice this means that eros is freed from ontological necessity and does not lead any more to the exclusiveness which is dictated by nature. It becomes a movement of free love with a universal character The body, for its part, as the hypostatic expression of the human person, is liberated from individualism and egocentricity and becomes a supreme expression of community - the Body of Christ, the body of the Church, the body of the eucharist." (op. cit-p.63).

Buber has caught a glimpse of the truth, the perennial wish of mankind for communion and love expressed through the body. In the ecclesial hypostasis, beyond the purview and conception of humanism, the body transcends its individualism and separation from other beings.³³ Buber has glimpsed the fact that the truth about human beings is not to be found in their isolation and autonomy but in relation to others. This longing for relation is innate in the theological sense of being part of our true nature as human beings, and is a dynamic process, a continual state of becoming. He furthermore develops the idea of community as both a social context and an existential situation

³³ It is precisely here that the eucharistic hypostasis differs markedly from the humanistic conception of the person with all its tragic overtones. Like the non-Christian writers we have reviewed, Christianity accepts that the tragic aspect of the biological hypostasis must be fully lived and lived intensely, but the Christian way of living is *ascetically* - "to endow it with real being, to give it a true ontology, that is, eternal life" (Zizioulas J. p. 63). "The ascetic character of the person, derived as it is from the eucharistic form of the ecclesial hypostasis, expresses the authentic person precisely when it does not deny eros and the body, but hypostatizes them in an ecclesial manner." (ibid). And in a footnote Zizioulas adds,

"The similarities which appear at first sight to exist between the understanding of man in the works of the ascetic Fathers and the insights of contemporary existentialism arise from this. But the ascetic Fathers do not exhaust the concept of the person in the reality of the biological hypostasis; they also recognize its eschatological transcendence."

between persons in which alienation can be overcome through genuine dialogic relationship.

In considering religion Buber emphasises the social aspect where the locus is the interaction between persons. We have previously observed this emphasis from many theologians, among them Rahner and Schillebeeckx, who highlight the nature of the Church as constituted by the transactions of God's people in such a way that the transcendent is revealed in the encounter of human beings with one another. Also in this context it is most significant that Buber emphasises the notion of revelation, this revelation of the divine in the human as event, again echoing those theologians, especially the above, who do the same, particularly the event of the encounter with Jesus Christ which is event rooted in our anthropology but also in the transcendent.

Summary

We have observed so far that the nature of the Church is essentially defined by the event-nature of faith and the dynamic process of dialogue based on the personal nature of God and the relational nature of the Godhead. The latter aspect brings out the existential aspect of the Church, the experience of living in the Church in a communion of love. This also emphasises the personal work of the Holy Spirit. The notion of *koinonia* is founded upon the relation between persons resulting from their participation in the mystery of Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus all activity in the Church is, as Tillich says, a form of mediation or ministry. Life in the Church, as thus conceived, is a way of being, God's way of being. Communion is an "event". This collectivist approach, which is very much part of the Orthodox tradition,

especially exemplified by Zizioulas, is in marked contrast to the individualism of much philosophy and theology in the West from the late Middle Ages onwards.

We have also observed that many contemporary theologians have been working along somewhat similar lines to Zizioulas. They have similarly stressed the importance of ecclesiology, a trend which commenced at the start of the nineteenth century, but they also emphasise the personal, although rarely with the patristic perspective of Zizioulas, and never in such a focused way. It is one of Zizioulas' major contributions to contemporary theology that he has so emphatically focused upon the person, finding his inspiration in patristic theology. It has been this emphasis that has enabled us to focus upon the person as the initiator of dialogue. The personal and interpersonal also provide a link with philosophers in the last one hundred and fifty years. Of the theologians, Schillebeeckx lays great emphasis upon encounter between persons, and between us and God as a fundamental mode of being human. He thus emphasises the interpersonal and experiential - it is in experiencing that we identify what is experienced. In line with the thinking of Kant we know our experience is finite. This sense of finitude can be experienced as suffering, as "fallenness", as existential alienation from our true selves. And yet at the same time we can experience something that transcends our finite human experience, unexpected grace, God's saving action, but experienced by us horizontally, in the interpersonal, and above all in the historical encounter with Jesus Christ.

Rahner has a similar emphasis and is at pains to point out that it is impossible to separate the human and the divine, since our reflection on experience is a participation in the divine, an idea with which Buber would concur emphatically. So much is he convinced of this that he believes we cannot even conceive of the idea of the God-man

without proof of the transcendental orientation in man's being and history under grace. The most objective reality of salvation is at the same time also the most subjective. In contrast to an essentially communitarian and interpersonal view of man, he contrasts the "transcendental philosophy of the autonomous subject". Buber never uses the word autonomy in this sense, but is well aware that this individualistic isolation has led to persons being reduced to items within a false collectivity.

This would seem to indicate that contemporary philosophy is on a very different path to theology, a divergent path indeed. Rahner sees this very division as a symptom of all mankind's works, marked as they are by inner dividedness. Yet this emphasis on the "autonomous subject" is paradoxically profoundly Christian since it places man at the centre, the subject on whose freedom hangs the whole cosmos. Once again mankind's fallenness and alienation is a central theme which demonstrates how much theologians have taken to heart the philosophers' thinking. And indeed it conversely becomes apparent that the philosophers, coming from this individualistic intellectual culture, cannot escape the interpersonal in respect of experience.

Rahner is heavily influenced by Heidegger, whose stated aim is to evolve a metaphysic of the human person. Here again the emphasis is on experience, man's existence, his being-in-the world, Dasein. And one important aspect of this being is being-with-others. Heidegger is important here also because he stands at the centre of nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy, looking towards both the phenomenologists such as Husserl and Merleau-Ponty and the Existentialists. It would be quite correct to refer to Rahner, Schillebeeckx and other modern theologians as phenomenological in their approach.

Heidegger is also related to the so-called existentialists. While many of these appear to be a long way away from the theologians, they concur on the one central fact that mankind's essential nature is one from which, in his actual existence, he is separated, one that has yet to be realised. This is closely linked to what we might call "fallenness" - empirical human existence is estranged from its true, genuine and authentic modes: many designations and diverse presentations, but always the same phenomenon.

So too the solution to man's predicament is also diverse. For Heidegger man is moving towards nothingness, for what is grasped vanishes into nothing, as does existence for Sartre. Rahner, perhaps more than any other contemporary theologian, grasps this nettle in asserting that the termination of mankind's question about beings does not terminate in nothing, is not Nothing, but is infinite Existence, "which is tasted like a nothing because it is infinity."

It is against this background that Buber stands with his own solution to the "fallenness" or alienation of man, his own awareness of the crisis of human existence. Like Rahner he does not believe that life is ultimately meaningless. His approach to life's question is totally existential since he believed that only by concentrating on human beings finding their own authentic existence, actualising themselves, could a solution be found. In pursuing this theme, he acts somewhat as a bridge between philosophy and theology, subsuming in his thinking so much nineteenth and twentieth century thought. For example, he treads a middle path between the existentialist individualism and the communalism of the social thinkers.

His revolutionary approach, so similar to the theologians and indeed to the basis of Christianity, is that true loving is authentic existence. For Buber believed that alienation from the divine is the key to the modern person's condition. This is a

fundamental link with Zizioulas and the entire Christian tradition. This alienation produces the alienation of one person from another. His approach to overcoming this evolved over the years. It began with the evolution of the concept of dialogue and relation: which way of living is frustrated by separation and isolation. This analysis requires an adequate understanding of the human person, an adequate anthropology for relational living. To this end he developed a form of existential phenomenology, but not using as his starting point the isolated individual but the person in relation to others with an innate longing for relation in a continual state of becoming, a dynamic anthropology, in a similar way to Zizioulas and Rahner. Buber developed a more active interpretation of human relationships, from the perspective of his own definition of entelechy to overcome his critics who claimed that the thinking of I-Thou was too static.

Furthermore, Buber applies these ideas to the actual problems of society - something which his philosophical precursors singularly failed to do. But it must also be acknowledged that he was much influenced by the social thinkers, who tended to be of necessity, more prescriptive. He develops the understanding of community as people "taking their stand" in living mutual relation with a living Centre, whatever that may be in different historical circumstances and situations. Community is both a social context and an existential situation between persons, but one in which alienation can be overcome through education conceived as the actualising of a person's qualities through a genuine dialogic relationship.

Buber comes very close to the modern theologians in his mature conception of religion. His emphasis on religion as a social phenomenon for which the locus is the interaction between persons echoes the theologians to whom I have already referred.

For example, I have previously quoted Schillebeeckx who says that God is not revealed from above or below, but horizontally, in the encounter of human beings with one another. Transcendence lies in human experience, but in such a way that this experience contains an intrinsic reference to what makes this experience possible.

Moreover in line with his deconstructive view of language, Buber insists that the language we use of God must reflect this relational view of the divine in order to correct the philosophical tendency to view God in abstract terms, the very abstractions that the existentialists find so irrelevant. His contrast between an existential and essential definition of faith is most helpful but he is a little cavalier in ascribing these respectively to Jewish and Christian faiths. It is, finally, highly significant that in his view of revelation we return to the notion of revelation as event, as this seems to demonstrate in a striking way how relevant Buber's views are to both his existential predecessors who emphasise the event of existence, the event of knowledge and of being human with other humans and also to the contemporary theologians who stress the event-nature of revelation and faith, and particularly the event of the encounter with Jesus Christ, which is rooted in our history, our anthropology and also in the transcendent.

We have observed that Buber's perennial preoccupation is an edifying one: the overcoming of alienation through true community based on dialogic relation. Presented in this way, this aim could be seen as a "secular" equivalent of salvation, the overcoming of fallenness. But we have also seen that although not presented in particularly "religious" categories, Buber's approach is deeply theological. Zizioulas sees the overcoming of fallenness or alienation as accomplished through the gracious participation in God's way of being. He sees this as, at one and the same time a "way

of relationship with the world, with other people and with God". It is an "event of communion" which is why it can only be realised for the individual person in the community of the Church, in its *koinonia*.

Buber's way of seeing community as both a social context and an existential situation between persons is a most subtle idea, but one which fits remarkably well with Zizioulas' notion of the Church as the eucharistic community. It sheds light on the dichotomy which Zizioulas acknowledges between the Church as institution and as charismatic event, if we may take "social context" to relate to "institution" and "existential situation" to charismatic event. Zizioulas sees this dichotomy or tension resolved in the pneumatological perspective, a perspective not available to Buber with his Jewish conception of God's utter transcendence. It must be acknowledged in the last analysis that only God's real intervention between persons can bring about true community. Buber remains waiting for an answer that has already been given.

There is in Zizioulas' conception a strong identitarian way of thinking, identity between the believer and other believers in the Church and between believers and Jesus Christ. It does not seem fanciful to see a strong parallel here to Buber's thinking on community as accomplished by both reference to the dialogic relation to others and the reference to a common Centre.

In the light of what Zizioulas and others have asserted concerning community, we can further investigate the nature of the transactions of God's people understood in the perspective of a dialogic process by comparing this with Buber's extended teaching on dialogue and community.

CHAPTER IV

ZIZIOULAS AND BUBER IN A COMMUNITARIAN PERSPECTIVE

Alienation and Church Institution

It is well worth noting at this point in the investigation of the nature of the Church as community that Buber and Zizioulas both demonstrate a general desire to get back to essentials, to fundamentals, Buber in relation to Judaism and the Jewish community and Zizioulas in relation to the Church community. Of Buber, Hans Urs von Balthasar says:

"Buber's method is one of ruthless simplification and clarification in which everything superfluous or inessential is mercilessly swept aside - everything that has accumulated during the centuries, everything decadent and distorted: a method of reduction, reducing everything to essentials, and which does not falter on the threshold of the Old Testament, but makes use of the whole apparatus of modern biblical scholarship to break through the kernel and to uncover the source, in order to display it alone as the driving power and inspiration of the whole " (Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961 p. 32).

Zizioulas similarly demonstrates a desire to return to the sources to release a new and fresh vision of what being a Christian in the Christian Community is all about. In relation to the twin dangers of Orthodoxy disincarnating the Church and Western Christianity of "over-incarnating" the Church, he says:

"Consequently the two theologies ... need to meet in depth, to recover the authentic patristic synthesis which will protect them from the above dangers " (Zizioulas J. p.20).

And both use the method of relating faith to the existential needs of modern man and emphasising the existential elements within, existential elements which have become obscured by the accumulations of the centuries.

Alienation is one of these elements and it is because of this emphasis that Buber acts as a bridge between philosophy and theology. He considered himself a sort of philosopher, but one whose ultimate purpose was not simply to change our way of thinking, but "to take us out of our old selves, by the power of strangeness, to aid us in becoming new beings" (Rorty R. Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1979, p.360). Buber always denied that he was a theologian or a religious thinker, denying any unique knowledge of the divine. At the same time, in sharp contrast to Nietzsche, he considered the encounter with the divine to be a basic positive force in human existence:

"The primary thing is the religious life of Judaism ... the recollection and expectation of a precise situation in concrete history: the encounter of God and mankind. Everything is affirmed in the abstract or in the third person about the Divine, everything that goes beyond the sphere of 'I and Thou' is a construction, a projection on the conceptual plane that is always felt as in-essential but unavoidable " (Buber M. Kampf um Israel, Berlin, Schocken, 1933 p.31).

This encounter places upon Judaism, according to Buber, an obligation in respect of God. Balthasar comments:

"The fact remains that Judaism and Christianity ... are the last two witnesses to an absolute mission in the world, given by God -absolute in the 'scandalous' sense of an obligation binding man to the particular and visible, 'thus and thus only' " (Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961 p.72).

Buber himself has admitted that this may well be the point where Jew and Christian might begin their lonely dialogue:

"Israel is unique ... and cannot be fitted into any genus or category. There is no pigeon-hole in history made to take Israel. ... That is the one position from which we Jews can speak to Christians, for that is the only situation which offers the existential possibility of an answer. ... Only we two, the Church and Israel, know what Israel really means " (Buber M. Die Stunde und die Erkenntnis, Berlin, Schocken, 1936 p. 148).

Given the above Buber was willing to accept the label of religious thinker so long as it was understood that religion is "a reality, rather the reality, namely, the whole existence of the real man in the real world of God, and existence that unites all that is partial". (Schilpp P. and Friedman M. Eds., The Philosophy of Martin Buber, LaSalle, Ill., Open Court, 1967 p.742) ³⁴

³⁴ The problem with much nineteenth and twentieth century thinking, on this subject is that we are forced into making a choice between an extremely individualistic anatomy of alienation as is provided by, for example, the existentialists and a collectivistic interpretation as is provided by the social thinkers. We have observed previously the problems of relating existentialism to theology, the selective bias that this creates whereby only the more individualistic theological themes get included in the analysis, so that violence is done to the broader theological themes. There is a similar problem with the social thinkers because in relating them to theology only the more collectivistic theological themes are analyzed or other themes forced to fit into a sociological framework. For example, it may be that the theological notion of sin is interpreted univocally in the Marxist terms of class struggle. This is the accusation frequently made of Liberation Theology.

Buber's categories are neither individualistic nor collectivistic, but see human existence as the interplay of both of these, a middle path between them, which he called the "interhuman" (*Zwischenmenschliche*), as we have previously seen. From the outset Buber adopted a relational view of human existence which runs firmly counter to the individualistic tendency we have observed in modern thinking. Buber's unique set of categories and concepts provide a direct line into theology in the way other philosophers do not.

Furthermore Buber's categories enable him to develop a rounded notion of alienation, as estrangement from other human beings, the world and God, which other thinkers cannot because they analyse according to preformed sets of criteria, either individualistic or collectivistic. In a sense Buber's concepts are much more subtle and this, in itself, is a link with the subtle theological concepts of sin and reconciliation. In another sense as well, Buber's concepts are more holistic. He observes the subtle interplay between the different aspects of alienation, from human relations, from the world and environment, and from God. All these themes can be seen in the Lurianic texts which inspired Buber's existential form of Hasidism. Indeed Buber can be seen as being closer to the historical and eschatological elements of Luria than of Hasidism, which internalised these elements as an inner spiritual process. Buber's ideas bring him close to the holistic approach to understanding existence which characterises the best theology. For example, Zizioulas emphasises an understanding of salvation which has profound cosmic dimensions, beyond humanity alone. The central importance of communion extends to the whole of nature, the whole of creation with humankind as its priest.

Hans Urs von Balthasar alludes to a similar emphasis within Buber's teaching:

"If the existence of Israel in the world since Christ, and quite particularly in the world of today, has a meaning and consequently a purpose, a precise significance, we should not be far wrong in regarding the defence of the natural order, to which Israel seems called, as an essential element in its mission. Israel is the temporal image of the whole earthly and heavenly kingdom of God, whose coming 'in mirrors and riddles' is the Church of Christ. The Church must fulfil both tasks simultaneously, it must embody the Word of God and the flesh of Jesus Christ more fully in the temporal order, and at the same time uproot and transplant the world as a whole into the Kingdom of Heaven and time into the dimension of eternity." (Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961 p.107).

Zizioulas notes that the discoveries of Einstein have meant a radical reappraisal of traditional physics. One consequence is that the Greek conception of being has been critically affected by the idea of relationship: for the natural sciences in the post-Einstein period, existence has become relational:

"Subject and object are now related, thus bridging the hitherto unbridgeable gap between the two " (Zizioulas J. p.119).

Zizioulas believes that the Greek patristic synthesis concerning truth and communion is capable of overcoming the split between the Church and science, since the Christian scientist will be "carrying out a para-eucharistic work, and this may lead to the freeing of nature from its subjection beneath the hands of modern technological man. The eucharistic conception of truth can thus liberate man from his lust to dominate nature". This emphasis brings us right back to the instrumentalist ethos described in Buber's

Daniel and the definition of relationships to other people and to nature in terms of rational, goal-orientated categories which foster the conditions for our own alienation or inner dividedness. This state of alienation is essentially one of unfreedom and thus of sin.

It is not being suggested that the concept of "sin" and "alienation" are always the same. Many thinkers have used the concept of alienation in a purely secular or even materialistic sense, and seemingly without any reference to the transcendent. This would be especially true of Karl Marx, but this is clearly not the case with Buber, who uses it much as a theologian would use the notion of sin, since he sees alienation from the "Eternal Thou" as the root cause of all alienation. That humankind's fate is intimately linked with God puts his notion of alienation well within the theological ambit.

For example, on this point his thinking is very similar to Zizioulas when he is discussing the "hypostasis of biological existence". Zizioulas is aware of the multi-faceted aspects of our unredeemed existence; he is aware that ontological necessity is a central aspect of the biological hypostasis. This necessity is something I experience intensely and personally, and by definition, individually, and yet it is also a collective experience of humankind. In other words, by emphasising that this "'failure' of the survival of the biological hypostasis" (i.e. death) "is not the result of some acquired fault of a moral kind (a transgression), but of the very constitutional make-up of the hypostasis, that is, of the biological act of the perpetuation of the species" (Zizioulas Z. p.52), he is lining up with Buber in not locating alienation purely within the individual or the collective, but in the interhuman.

Another important link is Buber's perception that "constitutionally" we are unable to sustain the transcendence of individualism permanently and slip back into a condition of alienation. He emphasises that the I-Thou relation is not a state of being that once achieved endures, "not a relationship understood for its own sake, an existential structure which supplants 'nature' in its primordial ontological role " (Zizioulas J. p.17) because every I-Thou relation necessarily reverts to an I-It relationship. What is of interest here is that he says "necessarily". This would suggest that the fault (of reversion) is not of a purely acquired moral kind, but is something constitutional in humankind's make-up.

Zizioulas' solution is, of course, more radical than Buber's, involving a radical renewal of the hypostasis within ecclesial existence, a new existential situation for a person. Buber's strivings for real community seem to see the desired end without fully comprehending the way. One senses that what Buber is striving for is precisely the community of the Church as conceived by Zizioulas. Ultimately he was disappointed with the Kibbutz movement, although he preferred to call it a "signal non-failure" (Paths in Utopia, Boston, Beacon Press, 1949 p.148; and following for a discussion of kibbutzim). Perhaps this is not a bad description of the Church.

It is interesting that Buber's particular precursor is Nietzsche because he is concerned with the fundamental existential crisis in the life of the modern person.

Nietzsche emphasized the crucial importance of personal existence in the face of inherited social forms and cultural patterns, including religion, which he saw as being in a state of terminal decline. Indeed death and rebirth is a recurrent theme in his writings. As we have previously observed, Buber drew back from the nihilism inherent

in Nietzsche's philosophy because of his deep religious sense of the meaningfulness of life.

However, a number of Nietzschean themes played a major part in Buber's writings, and these in turn can be seen to have direct relevance to much that is critical of certain aspects of Church structure or ecclesiastical institutionalism.

Buber stressed the obligation to actualise oneself and viewed intellectual systems and institutional structures as hideouts that engender alienation from self, from others and from nature.

Moreover, although in I and Thou Buber struggled to find an alternative to relationships built upon power, his concept of the ubiquity of I-It relationships, serves as at least partial confirmation of Nietzschean vision. Buber's institutional critique may be a help in understanding how the institutional aspect of Christianity can get exalted precisely because of the tendency of reversion to I-It relations. Indeed the tendency may be for the collective to be in conflict with the individual within Christianity. This explains certain aspects of the Reformation, which was certainly seen by the Reformers to be a recovery of religion for the individual Christian over the monolithic institution of the Roman Church. Buber went on from his early discipleship of Nietzsche to begin to look at the social aspects of alienation, turning to German social theorists - Marx, Tonnies, Simmel and Weber. Sociological insights into structures, group dynamics and institution may indeed help us to understand the "human transactions" to which Haroutunian refers, and which form the human "bricks" which make up the Church and may assist us in avoiding some of the worst aspects of alienation.

Human encounter, interpersonal relations, dialogue, as Buber has rightly asserted are all aspects of the drive for self-transcendence. Dialogue can be a wonderfully

liberating process, but it would be a foolish person, looking around our world, who would believe that it is an easy process, or one achieved at little cost.

The Sociological Ambiguities of Church Institution

Paul Tillich has highlighted this theme by distinguishing between the presence of the unambiguous Spiritual Community and the sociological phenomenon called "church". By this he means that woven into the very fabric of the "churches" there is this theological aspect of Spiritual Community. This is the creation of the Spiritual Presence, which is the Holy Spirit, in more traditional language. Tillich's use of "Presence" emphasises the immanence of the Spirit. And since "Spiritual Community" is the one constant in his ecclesiology, it would be reasonable to assert that Tillich is thoroughly pneumatological in his ecclesiology. Of course, it is partly Tillich's use of the concept of the churches as sociological phenomena that makes him so much a theologian of the modern era, since sociology, as such, is a creation of this period, beginning, as it did, with Durkheim and Weber in the late nineteenth century. In sociology the churches are observed and analysed as sociological institutions alongside other institutions. Such a way of looking at the Church is still regarded by some as inappropriate, since the Church is seen as a supernatural institution above the scrutiny of empirical science or mere human curiosity. But Tillich argues (Systematic Theology Vol. III, University of Chicago Press, 1964, p.176):

"The paradox of the Churches is in the fact that they participate, on the one hand, in the ambiguities of life in general and of the religious life in particular and, on the other hand, in the unambiguous life of the Spiritual Community."

And further:

"The sociologists of religion are justified in conducting these enquiries in the same way as the sociologists of law, of the arts, and of the sciences. They rightly point to the social stratification within the Churches, to the rise and fall of elites, to power struggles and destructive weapons used in them, to the conflict between freedom and organisation, to aristocratic esotericism in contrast to democratic exotericism, and so forth " (op.cit.pp.176-177).

Looked at from a purely human perspective the concrete churches are rather miserable compared with their claim to embody the Spiritual Community. Such a view of the Church must be balanced by the theological view, for a church judged only by its social usefulness has little justification for its existence alongside other useful groups.

Tillich says (op.cit.p.178) that this is the official Roman Catholic doctrine "according to which the Roman Church is a sacred reality above the sociological ambiguities of past and present. This makes it impossible to criticise the Roman Church in essentials - in doctrine, ethics, hierarchical organisation, and so forth." The Roman Church tries to ignore the ambiguities of its life and to submerge the Church's sociological character in its theological character, but the relationship of the two is paradoxical and cannot be understood either by eliminating the one or by subjecting the one to the other:

"This exclusiveness lacks self-criticism, lacks prophetic vision, excludes the element of surprise and accounts for many of the divisions within Christianity, especially those that occurred at the Reformation, arising from a failure to recognise the paradoxical nature of the Church, as reflecting the unambiguous life of the New Being and at the same time

reflecting all the ambiguities of life in this world of change and time "

(ibid).

We observe here that Tillich is spelling out in a specific ecclesiological framework what Buber is saying in general about institutions and the "laws which determine the life of social groups with all their ambiguities" (ibid). Here again the dissimilarities between Buber and the theologians are as important to the discussion as are the similarities. Buber usefully describes the alienating effects of structures and institutions, among which must be included the Church. His solutions on how to overcome these are not so clear, although not non-existent. There is always in his thinking some reference to a solution beyond the purely immanent. He is often at pains to conceal this religious aspect, the ultimate meaning of his Jewishness, in order to appeal as widely as possible to people of all religions and none.

Hans Urs von Balthasar asserts that it must be observed that Buber is aware of this discussion in Christianity, aware that the Church is incarnated in the world while witnessing to the transcendent element within it. (See Buber M. Israel and Palestine, London, East-West Library, 1952.) He asserts that this is the case because Buber is aware of the sacramental principle in Judaism as paralleling that in the Church. This is another area of convergence between Buber and Zizioulas and forms a link between them and the two religions which they represent. The sacramental principle in Judaism means that ultimately there is a unity of religion and the body politic: the key being the Land (Balthasar H Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961 p.49):

"It is a sacrament because the Land was given to the People by the grace of God, and the Lord himself works their salvation: it is a

sacrament administered as a physical sign of the divine and free efficacy of grace."

Moreover in Buber's thinking it was Hasidism which enabled him to see this truth:

"The aim of the Hasidim, according to Buber, though it was pursued in a naive manner, was to express in their lives the unity of the spiritual and the secular, and so to bridge the gulf between sacred and profane.

In a word, their ideal was a sacramental system " (op.cit.p.53).

"Here one sees the ethical and the religious almost coinciding with the sacramental sphere, which is why Buber regards it as the original and primitive Judaic notion primitively expressed in the relation of People and Land " (op.cit.p.55).

In his typically Hasidic way, Buber may be said to interpret the Utopian ideal of Israel, by implication at least, to signify the identity of the natural and the supernatural. Balthasar asserts that to Israel the Christian distinction between the natural and the supernatural spheres is utterly foreign; everything natural in Israel is out of the supernatural, in the sense that the race, its very blood, is what it is by election, and only divorce between the realms seems unreal. We may observe here a general point of dialogue between Judaism and Christianity, the emphasis upon "Kingdom" - the place of God's role and the ultimate fulfilment of the same. Both Buber and Zizioulas see this as important and it forms major element in their teaching. In contrast to Buber, however, Zizioulas teaches that the transcending of division between natural and supernatural can only come about through the descent of the Spirit. In this he receives confirmation from Tillich.

Tillich states this in the form that the sociological ambiguities of the Church can only be overcome by the Spiritual Presence which creates Spiritual Community. He defines Spiritual Community as "a power and a structure inherent and effective in such groups" (Systematic Theology Vol. III, University of Chicago Press, 1964 p. 173), such groups being churches.

"Spiritual Community" is the one absolute in his ecclesiology - the quality of the churches that makes them churches. So we have not ideal but real. Just as Spiritual Presence is operative for the resolution of ambiguities present in religion at the individual level, so Spiritual Community effects the same in the churches (op.cit.p. 162). The emphasis is on the unambiguous life of God - the vertical relationship between God, the ultimate and the community is definitive for the churches, and all else is paradox.

In his analysis of the dynamic essence of the churches (op.cit.p.173 ff.) Tillich maintains that the Church is holy, as a community in which the separation of man from God is overcome and in which God is present through His Spirit (op.cit.p.179). John Heywood Thomas has some observations on Tillich's conception of the Church's holiness in Paul Tillich: An Appraisal. (London, SCM). Because of the Spirit working within the Church, the Church carries within itself the principle of reformation. This idea of Tillich's concerning reformation is potentially his most important contribution to the ecumenical debate since it establishes that no church has a monopoly of holiness or authority, but all are subject to the overriding need for the grace of God in every aspect of their lives.

Likewise with the attribute of unity (Systematic Theology, Vol. III, University of Chicago Press, 1964, p.180), Tillich sees the ambiguity of unity and division in the

churches' historical existence as not susceptible of resolution by means of a force such as the ecumenical movement. The reason for this is simply that ecumenism and similar movements are operative principally on a horizontal plane, whereas the unity of the churches consists in a relation that is vertical, the terms of which are the sociological phenomenon of the churches and the Spirit. This means that disunity will always be a feature of the churches since the dynamics of life, sociological factors and the demand for reformation and prophetic criticism will always justify divisions:

"It is the divided church which is the united church" (op.cit.p.181).

Even as unity is paradoxically present in the divided churches and holiness in the ambiguous institutions through which they propagate themselves, so universality (catholicity) is also present, its power of receiving all that is good so that it is the re-established unity of those elements of being which in existence contradict each other, and also it is the power of uniting every particular group. Heywood Thomas observes (Paul Tillich: An Appraisal London, SCM, p.143):

"The universality of the church is again a paradox that neither Roman Catholicism nor Humanist Protestantism properly understands. The former refuses to acknowledge its own historical particularity and the latter makes its particularity a matter of history."

To take a given factor in the sociological structure of the Church, therefore, Tillich would say that it offers simultaneous opportunities for holiness and unholiness, unity and division, isolated particularism and universality.

The key to Tillich's position is in his conception of "Spiritual Community". For it is absolutely clear that the ambiguities of religion are only overcome by the "Spiritual Presence". The Divine Spirit is 'God present' (Systematic Theology, Vol. III,

University of Chicago Press, 1964 p. 114). The emphasis is here, as we have previously observed on the unambiguous life of God - the vertical relationship between God and the community. This really does not seem so different from the epicletic emphasis of Zizioulas. It is useful to find this important link between the Orthodox approach and the classic Protestant one, emphasising as it does, the transcendent element, focused on by Barth and others. This is an interesting counterpoint to the traditional Roman Catholic approach, which is to downplay the absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit. This point cannot be emphasized too strongly, since it constitutes the most serious critique of Roman Catholicism from both the Protestant and Orthodox perspectives. From the Orthodox side we have observed that Zizioulas emphasises that the Holy Spirit is essential to the constitution of the Church. In the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom we have:

"Send down thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon the gifts placed before thee " (Zizioulas J. p.160)

and the liturgy of St. Basil, which is more explicit:

"And to unite us all, as many as are partakers in the one bread and cup, one with another, in the communion of the one Holy Spirit " (ibid n. 70),

and Zizioulas continues:

"For the world to become even symbolically a real sign of the consummation of all in Christ would be an impossibility without the Holy Spirit. ... It is important to bear in mind that the Body of Christ both in the Christological (incarnational) and in the ecclesiological sense, became a historical reality through the Holy Spirit. ... In this

sense the eucharistic anamnesis becomes not a mere mental operation but an existential realisation, a re-presentation of the Body of Christ and, therefore, her catholicity constitutes a reality which depends constantly upon the Holy Spirit."

While it must be acknowledged that Buber cannot assimilate the notion of the Holy Spirit, Hans von Urs Balthasar asserts that the prophetic principle is very strong in Buber, based upon the concept of God's spirit "breaking through" via the nabiim, and acting in history:

"To Buber, therefore, Judaism is coincident with a vital prophetic tradition ... in which the Nabi time and again breaks into history and acts historically; that is the great historical refrain of Israel: Prophet against King " (Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961 p.36).

Indeed Buber sees the tension between this charismatic element and the institutional:

"But the King could resist the temptation to power, and where Israel is concerned that means the temptation to exchange the 'charismatic' leadership of God in the political order for the independent authority of a Ruler who administers power with the competence of a specialist." (op.cit p.38).

Zizioulas has above expressed a very similar sentiment in relation to the Church when viewed from an institutional standpoint rather than the pneumatological.

But Buber diverges from Christianity and such theologians as Zizioulas because his view of the Jewish conception of prophecy is wanting in the transcendent element implied by fulfilment, it never rises above itself, and because it remains imprisoned

within the scheme of its own thought, it is finally precipitated into the paradox of social utopianism. Balthasar comments (op.cit.p.77):

"Where Buber is concerned, the principle of Judaism is unquestionably the prophetic principle, but it is not prophecy pointing towards fulfilment in Christ: on the contrary, it is prophecy resting in itself yet filled with a profound unrest."

He goes on to say that as a result of the above Israel is isolated, which affects the Church:

"That isolation is the first and fundamental Schism which robs the Church of the unity intended by providence." (op.cit.p.78).

Fr. Louis Bouyer makes a similar point ("La Bible et L'Évangile" in Lectio Divina, Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 1951 p.21) that the Church cannot permanently be satisfied with anything short of the heart of Israel.

We have previously noted that Zizioulas speaks of eschatology and communion as the first two aspects of pneumatology within the eucharistic context. Eschatology is important here because the eucharist is an anticipation of the Last Days and the heavenly Messianic banquet. Zizioulas is at pains to emphasise that the final consummation can only be brought about by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who brings about communion in the same eucharistic context, which emphasises the existential experience of being part of the eucharistic action. By contrast it has been asserted (See O'Meara T. A. & Weisser C. D. Eds. Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965) that Tillich, reflecting the general Protestant line, unduly emphasises the rupture between God and humankind and as a consequence underplays the possibility of achieving communion in the Church. But

this judgement ignores the idea which is central to his ecclesiological thinking, namely "Spiritual Community", namely that it is essentially a community brought about directly by the Spiritual Presence. It should be noted that Tillich's use of the word "Presence" is related to a major insight of his theology, namely that Spiritual Presence transcends the split between subject and object. This does not undermine the notion of the Spirit as visitation, as essentially epicletic. Tillich would be opposed to any suggestion of a permanent modification of the Church institution, an ecclesial opus operatum. A careful reading of Systematic Theology Vol. III makes it quite clear that he teaches that this community is epicletic in character in spite of its human failings.

What is important about this statement of Tillich's is that he clearly states that all these dangers are inherent in the churches' life, yet are susceptible of being overcome, at least in a fragmentary sort of way. In many of the discussions and dialogues between different churches, a great deal of emphasis is put upon theoretical differences, but little thought is given to practical matters: how equality is maintained, how leadership is exercised, how legal forms are actually used to the benefit of the particular church.³⁵

³⁵ Tillich mentions (Systematic Theology Vol III, University of Chicago Press, 1964, pp.183 ff) the ordinary layman reciting the, creed, the section about the unity, the holiness and the universality of the Church and understanding the paradox of the churches without the concept of the Spiritual Community. We are all aware - layman and clergy alike - of the paradoxical meaning of these words as applied to our churches from our own experience. We also realise that it is unlikely that these paradoxes will be resolved one day in the future. And yet we are "grasped by the power of the words in which the unambiguous side of the Church is expressed" (ibid). Tillich has attempted to express this common awareness in theological terms and related it to the very nature of the Church. To link the two aspects of ambiguity in relation to the nature of the Church is a very real contribution to the ecumenical debate and should encourage further reflection within the separate churches in the task of working out an ecclesiology which can comprehend the social, cultural and theological pluralism of the churches.

Tillich puts this in another way to further clarify his meaning. It is here that Tillich's conception of the Spiritual Community in its latent and manifest stages comes into play (see op cit p,162). Tillich states that the Spiritual Community is determined by the appearance of Jesus as the Christ, but it is not identical with the Christian Churches. Tillich says (ibid):

"In the present context we are seeking the appearance of the Spiritual Community in the preparatory period and are thereby implying that where there is the impact of Spiritual Presence and therefore revelation (and salvation) there must also be Spiritual Community." If, on the other hand, the appearance of the Christ is the central manifestation of the divine

Spirit, the Spiritual Community's appearance in the period of preparation must differ from its appearance in the period of reception. This view seems to be supported by Hans Urs von Balthasar (Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961 p.96)

"This conception of a dynamic tradition advancing from the level of world religions up to the absolute height and fullness of Christ - a conception close to that of the Old Testament, and clearly formulated by St. Paul - cannot simply be reduced to, or explained away in terms of, that other conception according to which Israel is the fleshly parable of the subsequent spiritual reality."

The terms "latent" and "manifest" should not be confused with the classical distinction of the invisible and visible Church, which we have seen has been so prominent in the history of ecclesiology. J. Heywood Thomas observes (Paul Tillich: An Appraisal, London, SCM, 1963) that the main difference between this distinction and the customary opposition of invisible and visible Church is that both the latent and manifest Church are historical phenomena. Both are present in all periods of history and are at once theological and sociological, invisible and visible. Tillich's doctrine of Spiritual Community, namely ruling out it being a group beside other groups, is a reaction against the "orthodox" notion of ecclesiuncula, a little remnant of the Church composed of all those who effectively hear the Gospel when it is preached and who profit from the evangelical sacraments when they are rightly administered (see Althaus P. The Theology of Martin Luther, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1966, pp.333 ff). Here too Tillich rejects a notion recognizably Calvinistic, namely, that the Church is composed of all the predestined of every age and place (see Parker T. H.L., John Calvin in Cunliffe-Jones H. Ed. A History of Christian Doctrine, Edinburgh, Clark, 1978 pp.396-397). Tillich says that the qualities invisible and visible must be applied to the Church both in its latency and in its manifestation, and that the distinction between the Spiritual Community and the churches suggested may be helpful in avoiding possible confusions between latency and invisibility. It is the Spiritual Community that is, "latent before an encounter with the central revelation and manifest after such an encounter." He continues (Systematic Theology Vol III, University of Chicago Press, 1964, p.163):

"This 'before' and 'after' has a double meaning. It points to the world-history, the 'basic kairos', which has established the centre of history once for all, and it refers to the continually recurring and derivative kairos in which a religious cultural group has an existential encounter with the central event." This seems to relate rather well to what Balthasar says of Israel:

"The influence of Israel in the world, and its prophetic driving force, can only be significant if they do not rush headlong into an absolutist, Utopian void, and if it is given a Telos, a meaningful end which, from the inner necessity of the situation, can only be Jesus Christ, therefore in harmony with the immanent tendency of Judaism" (Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961 p.108).

'Before' and 'after' in connection with the Spiritual Community's latency and manifestation refer directly to the second sense of the words and only indirectly to the first."

Tillich gives a concrete example of what he means, in terms of individuals and groups outside the organized churches who show the power of the New Being in an impressive way. The churches represent the Spiritual Community in a manifest religious self-expression, whereas the others represent it in secular latency. To recognize that there can be a latent Church precludes the possibility of ecclesiastical arrogance, but Tillich insists that this does not mean that the Church is not the community in which the New Being in Christ is actual. Then comes an important passage (op.cit.p.163):

"The term 'latent' comprises a negative and a positive element. Latency is the state of being partly actual, partly potential: one cannot attribute latency to that which is merely potential, for example, the reception of Jesus as the Christ by those who have not yet encountered him. In the state of latency, there must be actualized elements and elements not actualized. And this is just what characterizes the latent Spiritual Community. There is the Spiritual Presence's impact in faith and love; but the ultimate, criterion of both faith and love, the transcendent union of unambiguous life as it is manifest in the faith and love of Christ, is

Koinonia and the Renewal of Church Institution

Tillich's very use of the notion of "Spiritual Community" reminds us of that central theme of Buber's: his conviction that the individual person could overcome alienation in the context of genuine community. We have noted before that, at the turn of this century, Buber was concerned about Jews being, as he saw it, alienated from their own religion and culture. He believed that a revising or reform of Judaism was necessary for the twentieth century, and he used the Kabbalistic myth of the broken vessels to express his ideas about community. A broad interpretation of what he says is that the drive towards community, in personalist terms, and more generally in cosmic terms, arises because of the essential unity of God. Thinking in terms of personal encounter or dialogue, Christians can accommodate this ontologically. Buber is ultimately unable to do this, but one senses that he would like to, if he had not previously eschewed "philosophical" or ontological discourse. He seems to have an insight into the possibility of a community of persons as somehow stemming from community in God, - "The extended lines of relations meet in the eternal Thou" (Buber M. *I and Thou*, T. & T. Clark, 1987, p. 99)- but this is no doubt prevented in going further by his perception of Jewish monotheism and the absolute transcendence of God.³⁶ If we

lacking." Tillich believes that such a schema can be applied to the whole history of religion. "The groups and individuals are teleologically related to the Spiritual Community in its manifestation: they are unconsciously driven towards Christ."

³⁶ It may be speculated that Buber's study of Lurianic Kabbalah caused him to reflect on some of the other aspects of Kabbalah, for example the existence of the spheres, or Sephiroth, which are considered to be stages in the emanations of the Spirit of God and man in its progress from noumenal existence to its building of a physical vehicle in the phenomenal world. To some extent this Kabbalistic teaching may be seen as an attempt to bridge the otherwise seemingly unbridgeable chasm between man and the utterly transcendent God, since it establishes a form of community based on participation or relationship. The Kabbalistic writers also teach that all manifestation is based on duality, a notion much older than Kabbalistic teaching. It is an interesting insight that monotheistic Jews came up with the idea of a duality which originates in God. Thus the sphere of Kether, the Godhead, differentiates into Binah, which is negative, female, material and passive, and Chokmah which is positive, male, spiritual and active. (see Knight G *A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism*, Cheltenham, Helios, 1965)

have asserted that the true sphere of the work of the Spirit in the Church is in the human transactions or communion in the community of the Church, we are also saying that this corresponds with what Buber describes as the "interhuman" (*das Zwischenmenschliche*) both of which describe an existential state of being, what Zizioulas calls a "mode" of existence" (Zizioulas J. p.15), "an event of communion". It is interesting to observe that communion, like "*das Zwischenmenschliche*" eludes the normal categories of human sciences, because it is neither a feeling nor a social form. Buber's denoting of the interhuman is most helpful in this context since it gives greater definition to Zizioulas' "event of communion", explaining it in existential terms, which is neither an effective state, nor a sociological category, but an existential relation between persons. The understanding of these existential categories eludes psychologists and sociologists alike. That we are considering here similar ideas is attested by the fact that, for Buber, interhuman relations are not primarily a matter of feeling but consist of actual lived encounters. "Actual lived encounter" seems to coincide quite well with Zizioulas' "event of communion".

A more subtle aspect of Lurianic Kabbala which is relevant to this idea of community with or within the Godhead is the idea of "tsimtsum" - the "withdrawal of God", which suggests that the existence of the universe is rendered possible by the act of contraction of God within himself. God made a "place" for the world in abandoning a region interior to himself. As Gershom Scholem has said (*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, London, 1955, p.261):

"The first act of En-Soph, the Infinite Being, is therefore not a step outside but a step inside, a movement of recoil, of falling back upon oneself, of withdrawing into oneself. Instead of emanation we have the opposite, contraction.... The first act of all is not an act of revelation but one of limitation. Only in the second act does God send out a ray of His light and begin His revelation, or rather his unfolding as God the Creator, in the primordial space of His own creation." These ideas may sound very strange to Christian ears, although the idea of self-limitation of God cannot be too far away from the Christian doctrine of Incarnation and its concomitant kenosis. While lacking theological precision these ideas may be seen as a part of a humanistic movement within Judaism to create greater intimacy between God and mankind, a movement with which Buber seems to identify. Christians will feel that this urge is a valid one, but has been met in the revelation of Jesus Christ who establishes, as Zizioulas has demonstrated, a personal identity and dialogue with the believer.

Indeed Zizioulas' conception of the eucharistic synaxis and Buber's definition of community bear certain resemblances or converge in a general way. Zizioulas refers to the eucharist as "first of all an assembly, a community, a network of relations, in which man 'subsists' in a manner different from the biological as a member of a body which transcends every exclusiveness of a biological or social kind." (ibid p. 60) While not completely the same, Buber's categories of community have about them some of the immediacy of Zizioulas' definition of the synaxis: first, community requires direct, unmediated relations between people; second, people must relate to one other wholly and not exclude from the outset any dimension of their lives, and finally genuine community is based upon relations that are need-free and non-purposive, in the sense of not using others in an instrumental way, but accepting them as persons in their own right; in other words, the prerequisites for community parallel the prerequisites for the I-Thou relation. (See "Erziehung zur Gemeinschaft", Jerusalem, Martin Buber Archives, Jewish National & University Library, 1929)

A further important insight which helps us understand communion better is Buber's perception that we are unable to sustain the transcendence of individualism permanently. This insight should enable us to avoid the pitfall of idealising church institutions and endowing them with infallible attributes they do not possess. It is here that we have seen how helpful Tillich is in focusing attention upon the ambiguities of the sociological phenomenon of "church". Indeed Tillich defines the Protestant principle as "the divine and human protest against any absolute claim made for a relative reality" (The Protestant Era, University of Chicago Press, 1948, p. 163). Balthasar comments in a similar vein in relation to Buber:

"Whether from a Jewish or a Christian point of view, there is no choice but to recognise that the institutional element (to which the Scriptures themselves belong) always needs to be made transparent through the power of prayer and a believing heart, in order that the charismatic element should be seen: that is the purpose of the institution sanctioned and placed upon us by the hand of God in order to strengthen us and weaken us, uplifting and humbling man at the same time, so as to place him once again in his right and original relation to God " (Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961 pp.45-47).

In Buber's early years he sensed a lack of vitality in Rabbinic Judaism, which was antithetical to immediate life experiences (Erlebnis):

"a misunderstood, distorted, deformed religious tradition, the power of a hard, static system of obligations alienated from reality, that negated all light and joy, all thirst for beauty and flight, stifling feeling and imprisoning thought in chains" (Buber M Die Jüdische Bewegung, Berlin, Judischer Verlag, 1920, 1:94).

It may be that Christians might uncover in his approach a way out of the ambiguities of their own situation to a more authentic way of living in the Church. This point was also made by Kierkegaard. He felt that rather than act out of concrete decision, individuals act out of abstract principles. In modern society, and this is reflected in church life, persons do not relate to each other on the level of genuine, spontaneous decision but in a detached manner. They live as if they were playing a game rather than living real life. Communication has deteriorated into talkativeness, and speech is characterised by abstraction and objectivity. Kierkegaard's solution to this problem

was to recover the original force and meaning, as he saw it, of Christianity as lived by Christ. To be a Christian meant to live as an individual, in complete subjectivity, without the consolation of fixed forms or objective certainty. Both he and Buber saw that renewal was always necessary if faith was to be an event, an existentially significant reality. For Buber, simply to reform the existing structures of beliefs and practices within Judaism was inadequate. What was required was a sudden and radical revision of the prevailing modes of Jewish life and thought:

"By renewal, I do not in any way mean something gradual, a sum total of minor changes. I mean something sudden and immense - by no means a continuation or an improvement, but a turning and a transformation " (Buber M. On Judaism, New York, Schocken, 1967, p. 35).

Christians will be familiar with this idea of renewal or turning, indeed it sounds very much like a Jewish equivalent of being born again.

The idea of event, of the Church as a way of being can find a parallel in Buber's concept of "Erlebnis", "immediate life experience". In his early writings Buber wrote of all mystical experiences being grounded in the inner life experiences of the mystics, which consisted of a fundamental experience of unity, in which life drives culminate. The idea of Erlebnis derives from Wilhelm Dilthey, who was one of Buber's professors in Vienna. Dilthey's ideas provide an important key to understanding Buber because, like the proponents of Lebensphilosophie he distinguished between experience and form, in a similar way to Simmel and Nietzsche. From these Buber derived the idea that the objectification of life into fixed forms and structures stifled the vitality of society and culture, indeed he considered individual experience to be prior to all forms

and structures. Buber considered form and experience in ancient Israel to be represented on one side by the priests and the cult, and later by the rabbis, and on the other side, experience to be represented by the prophets.

There is, however, a serious weakness here in Buber, which must be addressed. While emphasising experience over form, Buber would not accept that real religious life was simply a matter of inner experience. As we have seen he believed that the encounter with the unconditioned must be transposed into deed. Judaism entails the will to actualise this encounter through action. But, in keeping with his existentialist premises, Buber refused to prescribe the forms this action must assume. Which conclusion really leaves his argument in mid-air.

One can see the obvious parallels with the life in the church, experience and form, prophecy and institution, charismata and structure. That religious life will, to some extent, consist of a fruitful tension between the two seems almost a common place. But this essay has been at pains to see the Church-event as one in which the seeming clash between experience and form is transcended in ecclesial existence. This also seems to be the line of argument adopted by Zizioulas in arguing that the central act of the Church, the central event, the Eucharist, is both form and experience. Form exists in the Church in the sense that Christianity is founded on historical fact. Nevertheless history understood in the light of eucharistic experience is not the same as history as normally understood;

"It is conditioned by the anamnestic and epicletic character of the eucharist which, out of distance and decay, transfigures time into communion and life ... history acquires the dimension of the future,

which is also a vertical dimension transforming history into charismatic
- pentecostal events" (Zizioulas J. p.115).

The eucharist is both institution and charismatic event.

This follows over, for example, into the area of dogmatic formulations of faith, something of which Buber, with his antipathy to Rabbinicism, would be suspicious. For Zizioulas credal definitions carry no relationship with truth in themselves, but only in their being doxological acclamations of the worshipping community. They are simultaneously form and experience. Dogmas can only survive as truth within the communion-event created by the Spirit.

Likewise when we look at the institutional aspect of ecclesiology, it follows that the institution that is supposed to express the unity of the People of God must be an institution which expresses communion, in other words the form of the Church must express the experience of communion. In saying:

"The notion of communion must be made to apply to the very ontology
of the ecclesial institutions, not to their dynamism and efficacy alone "
(op.cit.p.140).

Zizioulas is suggesting that a synthesis of form and experience is necessary in the Church, but will only fully come about at the Eschaton, when sign becomes reality.

This way of thinking is not, however, exclusively the prerogative of the Orthodox. Some Roman Catholic theologians have in recent years accepted this dynamic or epicletic conception of the Church, an acceptance which has often caused them to be critical of institutionalism within their own Church. Edward Schillebeeckx, for example presents the Church as gradually straining towards perfection in spite of imperfection, striving to make present that which it claims to signify. This is to

introduce an eschatological dimension into the definition of the "here and now" Church. A similar point is made very forcibly by Yves Congar (Ésquisses du Mystère de L'Eglise, Paris, Edition du Cerf, 1953). Thus he says (op.cit.p.80):

"The Church is the reality of something that has come, which only consummates and perfects itself" and "is an intermediate state, an entre-deux" (op.cit.p.170).

The Church is constantly in danger of Pharisaism, turning means into ends, and in danger of the institution becoming formalistic. In a memorable phrase he says:

"The body of the Church has grown, but its skin has not: hence it is in danger of breaking " (op.cit.p.153).

As previously indicated this is something Tillich quite clearly acknowledges in the notion of latent Spiritual Community. Tillich deliberately avoids the terminology of visible/invisible Church and establishes the reality in our human history of Spiritual Community, a sign-presence among men, but a presence which is latent in the period before Christ, and after in groups which do not acknowledge the central saving event. In developing his ideas concerning the sacramental Church in an eschatological perspective Schillebeeckx asserts that (See Christ the Sacrament, London, Sheed and Ward, 1963, p. 55ff) if the Church is the sacrament of the risen Christ, and the sacraments, by derivation, effect what they signify "ex opere operato Christi", this must be true of the Church, a fortiori, in her social and visible totality. In other words the Church is only truly sacramental, only truly itself when it makes present that which it claims to signify.

In talking of sacramental symbolism generally Tillich makes the observation "the sacramental material is not a sign pointing to something foreign in itself", for a

sacrament is "neither a thing nor a sign" but "participates in the power of what it symbolises, and therefore it can be the medium of the Spirit."

If Tillich is saying that the "sacramental material is not a sign pointing to something foreign in itself", in the case of the Church it would not be a distortion to say, a fortiori, that the sacramental material is individual Christians in the koinonia, in the existential reality of their daily lives and relationships. This is the symbol pointing to the inward reality of grace, of God's saving power. If the sacramental "material" is not truly authentic then it is not a sign pointing to something other than itself.

It is interesting to observe that the conclusions arrived at in this relatively recent thinking on the nature of the Church were pioneered by Yves Congar (Chrétiens Désunis: Principes d'un Oecumenisme Catholique, 1939, Eng. tr. Divided Christendom, London, Bles, 1939). The most novel part of the book, and that which has particular relevance to our discussion, is the last section "Grandes lignes d'un programme concret d'oecumenisme catholique." In the summary (op.cit.p.319) he says:

"Through the separation of the separated, something has been lost, not to the essence of the Church, but to her 'Catholicité explicite et visible'."

Congar here seems to be pointing to the sacramental symbolism, which points to the inward reality of grace. Through disunity, through the lack of the fullness of this particular mark of the Church, its catholicity, or universality, as Tillich prefers, there is a lack in the fullness of the sacramental sign. The sacramental "material" is not truly authentic where disunity occurs, and thus the Church cannot effectively be the sign or sacrament of Christ's Paschal Mystery. There is an emphasis in Congar on the Church progressively realising its catholicity, in the same way as Tillich describes the

dialectical relationship of identity and non-identity with the Spiritual Community (op. cit.p.401):

"This unity exists at the present time in the Church. Yet the Catholicity of the Church is not completely realised, and there is a sense in which it is true to say not only that the catholicity of the Church is only imperfectly explicit, but also that the fact of separation plays a part in this imperfection and that what our separated brethren possess improperly outside the Church is so much missing from the present catholicity of this Church...."

The sacramental view of the Church unites the need for the outward form of the Church and at the same time acknowledges that it is only truly a sacrament when it makes present that which it claims to signify. The very sacramental nature of the Church is totally dependent upon the work of the Spirit. This is surely one of the major emphases of the Reformation, of Tillich's Protestant principle. This is fully in accord with Scripture: the whole teaching of St Paul is that the new creation born of the Spirit is the Church. Church and Spirit are inseparable, the experience of the Spirit in the Church gives access to the mystery of the Church. The charisms contribute to the building of the Church (1 Cor. 12 v 7 and 14 v 4) and consecrating the temple of God (1 Cor. 3 v 16, Eph. 2 v 22). The Spirit endlessly renews His action and His gifts. He works constantly for the unity of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12 v 12). The Spirit of communion (Eph. 4 v 3, Phillipians 2 v 1) pours out the supreme gift of charity into hearts (1 Cor. 13, 2 Cor. 6 v 6) and draws them all together in His own unity:

"There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called" (Eph.4 v 4).

Only the Spirit can assure that as well as signifying what it contains, the Church can contain what it signifies. "Signifying what it contains" refers to the objective condition of the Church's existence - that which is and is yet to be accomplished through the Spirit. So we observe that such a view of the work of the Spirit in the Church seen as sacramental permits the uniting with the traditional Protestant emphasis on the quality of faith as the most important indicator of the true Church. These conclusions have tremendous practical consequences for the churches, for in the light of much of contemporary ecclesiology, there must be a recognition that no church possesses the fullness of unity.

Koinonia and Structure for Dialogue

We have seen that Buber contributes his insights concerning the interpersonal, which may be taken and used to understand the dynamics of the christian community and he provides a link to some modern philosophers through his existential approach. But it is most obviously in I and Thou that Buber makes his greatest contribution to the philosophical exploration of interpersonal relations. His shift from an individualistic-existential framework to a social-interactional framework during the First World War derived from a deeply held conviction that a relational view of life was the only answer to the ills of mankind. Christians may perceive in this shift an insight into the way of salvation, to life lived in the community of the Church, in the Body of Christ. Indeed we have previously observed that Hans Urs von Balthasar has

spotted this link in Buber between Judaism and Christianity (See Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961).

The words below, written by Buber in The Holy Way in 1920, seem to summarise the argument we have been constructing so far concerning life in the Church:

"The Divine may come to life in individual man, may reveal itself from within individual man; but it attains its earthly fullness only where, having awakened to an awareness of their universal being, individual beings open themselves to one another, disclose themselves to one another, help one another; where immediacy is established between one human being and another; where the sublime stronghold of the individual is unbolted, and man breaks free to meet other men. Where this takes place, where the eternal arises in the Between (im Dazwischen), the seemingly empty space; that true place of actualisation is community, and true community is that relationship in which the Divine comes to its actualisation between man and man "

(Buber M. On Judaism, New York, Schocken, 1967, p.110).

There is here in Buber however an interesting paradox. He emphasises the interpersonal but he remained deeply suspicious all his life of institutions and structures which, in the course of history, arise out of these interpersonal relations. What often seems to be lacking in Buber is a strong sense of God with us, a living Presence in the persons and relationships themselves, a true sense of the immanence of God as well as his transcendence, which is another point also made by Balthasar. (See Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961) Nonetheless Buber is quite clear that the possibility of direct, unmediated relationships between persons must be restored; and

this in the face of institutional structures which preclude such relationships. It is not difficult to see the applicability of this to the Church. Zizioulas is quite specific in regard to institutional structures. He believes that a proper relationship must exist between the local and the universal Church, and that moreover there must exist ecclesial structures and institutions which help maintain the balance between the two. In other words, Zizioulas is asserting that the sort of paradox which we have observed in Buber between true dialogue and institutional structures existing for their own sakes must be overcome in the Church. In a key passage he says:

"Communion and oneness coincide in ecclesiology: there is no institution which derives its existence or its authority from anything that precedes the event of communion " (ibid).

It does not seem fanciful, indeed it is most helpful, to see a similarity between this and Buber's comment that "the true place of actualisation is community" (On Judaism, New York, Schocken, 1967 p.110).

This statement of Buber's marked a break with Kierkegaard, Lebensphilosophie, and the German mystics, emphasising as it does personal experience over institutions and that the divine-human encounter could only be fully actualised in the context of relations with other persons.

Zizioulas follows this line of thinking, when he says:

"When we look at the institutional aspect of ecclesiology, it follows that the institution that is supposed to express the unity of the Church must be an institution which expresses communion " (Zizioulas J. p.135).

Indeed, Zizioulas sees the ministry as critical to "safeguarding the oneness which the communion aims at expressing" (ibid). In a real sense the ministry is conceived by

Zizioulas, and ministry understood in its widest sense, as providing that creative element in relationships within the Church much in the way in which Buber sees human beings as creators. What Zizioulas sees as axiomatic for the universal Church, he also sees as such in the local church in the relationship between the "one" and the "many", the bishop and the people.³⁷

Zizioulas further points out that the Christian pattern of unity was very different from the non-Christian in the early Church. Brotherly love was not a Christian innovation. How the Christian love differed from the pagan was that it transcended not only social but also natural divisions. This "catholicity" of the eucharistic community was reflected in its structure, the different orders assembled around the bishop with his fundamental function of expressing in himself the "multitude" of the faithful in a particular place, offering before God in the eucharist the whole Body of Christ.

It does not seem fanciful to see the eucharistic synaxis as primitively understood as being a perfect representation or sacramental embodiment of Buber's deep-felt and

³⁷ Zizioulas points out that the incorporation of the "many" into the "one" in the eucharist figures prominently in the teaching of St Paul (see 1 Cor. 10 16-17). This in itself is linked to ideas connected with the "Suffering Servant" of Deutero-Isaiah and the "Son of Man" of Daniel. Deutero-Isaiah presents a mysterious servant who is in some ways like the Servant-Israel, but in other ways is distinguished from Israel and appears to be an individual person. Similarly in Daniel "bar nasha" indicates at one and the same time an individual person and the "saints of the Most High", Zizioulas states unequivocally of the philological inconsistencies of John 3, 11-13 that these can only be understood in an ecclesiological sense. And indeed this New Testament understanding of the "one" and the "many" is essentially relational, for it is based on the relationship with Christ, expressed sacramentally in the eucharist. And he quotes Ignatius of Antioch in his letter to the Christians of Smyrna:

"... let that be deemed a valid eucharist which is under the leadership of the bishop.... Wherever the bishop appears let there the multitude of the people be, just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there (is) the Catholic Church " (Zizioulas J. p.144).

It should be noted that this passage has often been given an institutional slant by being abbreviated to "ubi episcopus, ibi ecclesia", thus emphasizing the bishop as a linchpin of the institution. Seen in its full context it is the eucharist which is the linchpin under the leadership of the bishop. This introduces a dynamic element into the office of the episcopate which is lacking in the purely institutional perspective.

most authentic aspirations; aspirations which we, as Christians would see fulfilled in Jesus Christ im Dazwischen.

Buber believed that a new organic model of community was possible, based on the belief in the total connectedness of all existing beings. This idea is also present in Zizioulas in his wider conception of catholicity, that of the local eucharistic assembly understood as the revelation of the eschatological unity of all in Christ. It was indicated earlier that Buber remained all his life deeply suspicious of institutions and structures. Again it does not seem fanciful to suggest that Buber, if we may make that imaginative jump, would not have felt at odds in the ethos of the early Church which seems not to have defined itself in terms of structures or institutions beyond the eucharistic structure of the local churches. Unity was maintained, not with an external imposed structure, but by virtue of the whole Christ represented in each of them. Buber would have felt at home with this precisely because of the emphasis upon the relation of one person to another contained within the eucharistic conception focused upon the person of the bishop. Buber would have had a predilection for the local community with its charismatic rather than institutional structure, or rather that charismatic and institutional coincided. Furthermore an approach to unity based on collectivity would seem to be always in danger of succumbing to the utilitarian and instrumentalist ethos, whereas one based on identity avoids the structural problem altogether:

"The local Churches are full circles which cannot be added to one another but coincide with one another and finally with the Body of Christ and the original apostolic Church " (Zizioulas J. p.158 n 66).

The distinction previously mentioned between form and experience has a kind of parallel in Zizioulas' discussion of catholicity in terms of whether it is a given reality or a demand. There is in this question an interesting contrast with Buber. It will have been noted that Buber taught that new community would be actualised through helping relationships. The task, as seen by him, is to restore directness into human relationships because only through the immediacy of direct relationships can we combat the conditions that reduce persons to manipulatable objects. There is a strong moral or ethical element in all Buber's ideas: what we, as human beings must strive for, actualise. And yet there is also a strong sense of given-ness about Buber. "True community" is often spoken of as a given ideal, our true state of being, our original grace, from which we have fallen through sin.³⁸ It is so acknowledged because "true community" arises from God: so that for Buber there is an ontological aspect. With Zizioulas the contrast arises because he sees the dilemma of catholicity as a "given" or a "demand" as transcended, because in the eucharist what is given is revealed existentially as event:

"This problem, which is often presented in the form of a dilemma, is strange to the eucharistic vision of catholicity because in such a vision whatever is given is revealed in an existential way, i.e. in the form of a presence here and now, a presence so fully incarnate in history that the ontological and the ethical cease to claim priority over each other " (op. cit.p.159).

³⁸ Hans Urs von Balthasar notes this Utopian tendency in Judaism and Buber (See Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961 p.108). For Zizioulas catholicity lies not in the achievement of certain ethical aims, but as an existential experience of the unity of creation "insofar as this unity constitutes a reality in the person of Christ " (Zizioulas J. p. 159).

This vision of catholicity is thus related to Buber's conception of the Thou which offers possibilities for opening up persons to one another and thus actualising their humanity, a new existential understanding of being human in relation. As previously indicated one of Buber's primary objectives was to develop an adequate conception of human existence. If we are truly to understand how the Holy Spirit operates existentially in the transactions of His people we need an adequate conception of human existence as well. Buber emphatically comes to the aid of Zizioulas in conceiving of human life as grounded in relation. The former rejects the prevailing views of persons as "autonomous subjects", to use Rahner's phraseology, concerned with satisfying basic needs and gratifying instincts. We become what we are through the relations into which we enter. When, for purposes of analysis, we break down the universe, society or the person into component parts, we distort reality. This, in turn, generates and perpetuates a condition of alienation.

It is true that Zizioulas, in Being as Communion, does not spell out all the social, political and environmental consequences of universalism, but it is clear that he is very aware of them. He is aware that "the demonic powers of division ... operate in history" (op.cit.p.160) the "anti-catholic powers of the world" which are lined up against "Him who sums up in Himself the community and the entire creation by His being existentially involved in both of them" (op.cit.p.159). Zizioulas understands the ultimate essence of catholicity to lie "in the transcendence of all divisions in Christ" (op.cit.p.162) but furthermore:

"It covers all areas and all dimensions of existence whether human or cosmic, historical or eschatological, spiritual or material, social or individual etc. The dichotomies in which life has been placed or

conceived ... represent a betrayal of the catholic outlook so essential to the Church of Christ. In such a catholic outlook the entire problem of the relationship of the Church to the world receives a different perspective. The separation and juxtaposition of the two can have no essential meaning because there is no point where the limits of the Church can be objectively and finally drawn. There is a constant interrelation between the Church and the world, the world being God's creation and never ceasing to belong to Him and the Church being the community which through the descent of the Holy Spirit transcends in herself the world and offers it to God in the eucharist" (ibid).

Here indeed is a vision of total connectedness to match Buber's (*mutatis mutandis*), and indeed to outstrip him.

Buber's answer to the flaws in human nature, which he describes generally as alienation, is essentially an ethical one - human beings must strive to overcome it in all the ways they can. Buber here is not incorrect about the striving, but he fails to fully comprehend the answer, namely that this alienation can only be overcome in baptism by Jesus Christ into the ecclesial community and assumption of a new hypostasis, a new mode of existence.

In reflecting upon Buber's philosophical anthropology there is an illuminating comparison between his dynamic conception of the person and Zizioulas' understanding of asceticism. In contrast to the substantialist way of conceiving of the human person as being made up of fixed qualities that define his or her character, a person, in Buber's view, is in a continual state of becoming. In contrast to Nietzsche, Buber translated this dynamic conception into a relational, existential philosophy of

human existence. As well as his conception of relation, which is crucial to his thinking, Zizioulas equally focuses upon movement as a way of understanding our life in Christ and indeed God's inner life:

"The ecclesial hypostasis exists historically in this manner as a confirmation of man's capacity not to be reduced to his tendency to become a bearer of individuality, separation and death. The ecclesial hypostasis is the faith of man in his capacity to become a person and his hope that he will indeed become an authentic person." (Zizioulas J. p. 8).

Zizioulas then goes on to ask the question:

"What happens to the biological hypostasis of man when that which I have called the ecclesial hypostasis is brought into being? Experience tells us that in spite of the existence of baptism and the ecclesial hypostasis, man does not cease at the same time to be born and to die in accordance with his biological hypostasis " (ibid).

This, Zizioulas asserts, creates a paradoxical relationship between the two hypostases:

"Man appears to exist in his ecclesial identity not as that which he is but as that which he will be; the ecclesial identity is linked with eschatology, that is, with the final outcome of his existence " (op.cit.p.59).

This is further described by understanding this state of becoming as sacramental or eucharistic. The whole conception of the eucharist as assembly (synaxis) is dynamic, because the eucharistic community is moving forward, becoming that which it should become in God's gracious plan. Buber's dynamic conception of the person has some parallels with Zizioulas.

We have observed so far how Buber considers Western philosophy and indeed Western society and culture to have gone down a one way street, in which it is trapped. His prophetic voice offers a way out, a new way of thinking about human beings and human society. I and Thou attempts to foster a new conceptual language where individual words, such as I, You and It, are replaced by word-pairs I-You and I-It, which convey relation. The idea that language generates or constitutes the framework through which we see and experience reality had been developed by such philosophers as Wittgenstein. While Western philosophy may have gone along a particular line leading on to an impasse, Zizioulas reminds us that in the early centuries Christian theology made a definite break with the contemporary philosophy. (See Zizioulas J. p 16)

Because of the Arian crisis Athanasius found it necessary to break out of the closed ontology of the Greeks. It was necessary to assert God's being without having to link it with the world out of an ontological necessity. By connecting the Son's being with the substance of God, Athanasius, claims Zizioulas, transformed the idea of substance:

"To say that the Son belongs to God's substance implies that substance possesses almost by definition a relational character ... If God's being is by nature relational, and if it can be signified by the word "substance", can we not then conclude almost inevitably that, given the ultimate character of God's being for all ontology, substance, inasmuch as it signifies the ultimate character of being, can be conceived only as communion " (op.cit.p.84).

Buber's idea of the essential relatedness of the person thus finds a striking parallel in patristic thought as interpreted by Zizioulas. As a result of developing solutions to the

trinitarian problems, the term hypostasis became identified with the relational term *prosopon*:

"This meant that from now on a relational term entered into ontology and, conversely, that an ontological category such as hypostasis entered the relational categories of existence. To be and to be in relation becomes identical. For someone or something to be, two things are simultaneously needed: being itself (hypostasis) and being in relation (i.e. being a person). It is only in relationship that identity appears as having an ontological significance, and if any relationship did not imply such an ontologically meaningful identity, then it would be no relationship " (op.cit.p.88).

This personal life, firstly of God, and then of that which exists between human beings, represents two things, according to Zizioulas, which at first sight are in contradiction: particularity and communion:

"Being as person is fundamentally different from being an individual or a 'personality', for a person cannot be imagined in himself but only within his relationships ... The essential thing about a person lies precisely in his being a revelation of truth, not as 'substance' or 'nature' but as a mode of existence'. This profound perception of the Cappadocian Fathers shows that true knowledge is not a knowledge of the essence or nature of things, but of how they are connected within the communion-event. We saw above that the theme of ekstasis was a key idea in the Greek patristic concept of truth, but in its application to the idea of 'person' it needs to be completed by another theme, that of

hypostasis. While ekstasis signifies that a person is a revelation of truth by the fact of being in communion, hypostasis signifies that in and through his communion a person affirms his own identity and his particularity; he 'supports his own nature' in a particular and unique way " (op.cit.p.105).

Here again we observe that, in emphasising the communion-event, Zizioulas is emphasising the existential elements of patristic ontology.

This idea that it is only in relationship that identity appears as having ontological significance is related to Buber's conception of presentness. By objectifying that which stands over and against me, I reduce its fullness, relating only to a particular dimension or aspect of the other. At the same time, I hold back a part of myself. However when I stand in relation, I am fully present, withholding nothing of myself and confronting the other as a whole. Furthermore Buber and Zizioulas exactly concur in their understanding of the concept of person. Person refers to one who stands in relation. Buber teaches that, although conscious of their subjectivity, persons do not perceive themselves as subjects in relation to objects or experiences. In contrast, Buber uses the idea of ego to refer to one who is conscious of himself or herself as the subject of an action or experience. Unlike the person who enters into relation without predetermined goals, purposes, the ego steps back and stands apart in order to use or experience. This use of ego seems to correspond with what Zizioulas means by "individual" or "personality", or with what Rahner refers to as the "autonomous subject".

Buber's philosophical anthropology rested upon the assumption that a longing for relation is innate in all people. His task was not to introduce them to something new

but to help them recover their forgotten existential roots. To illustrate this Buber instances in I and Thou certain historical personalities who epitomise the relational mode of being in different spheres of life, for example Socrates in human conversation and the "I of pure intercourse with nature " (Buber M. I and Thou, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1987, p.89). In the sphere of religious life, Buber viewed Jesus as epitomising, in a phrase worthy of Tillich:

"... the I of unconditional relation in which the man calls his Thou Father in such a way that he himself is simply Son and nothing else but Son " (op.cit.p.90).

Although it would be invidious to read more into this sentence than Buber intended a profound theological import to this can be seen which is relevant to our theme. Although we must assume this was not his intention Buber's statement can be interpreted in a fully orthodox Christian way, that Jesus Christ is salvation because he is ontologically true, for in him being and communion coincide: it is in being "simply Son and nothing else but Son" that he "calls his Thou Father" and is thus a true person.

Refining the Categories of Dialogue

It is important to remember that Buber frequently revised his ideas. He himself suggested that insofar as the I-Thou mode of relation is discontinuous, the term *Begegnung* (meeting) might have been more appropriate. *Begegnung* would convey the sense that the I-Thou relationship cannot be sustained over time but necessarily reverts to an I-It relationship. The term *Begegnung* indicates a one-time event and seems to preclude any kind of continuity. Yet, in Buber's view, in all relationships an I-Thou relationship always remains a latent possibility. Accordingly, in order to

convey the idea that, in any relationship between persons, relation remains a possibility, Buber used the term *Beziehung* (relation). *Begegnung* and *Beziehung* relate closely to the theme of this essay and the relational approach of Zizioulas and others.

In the years following the publication of *I and Thou*, Buber was made aware of various weaknesses in his argument and attempted to answer his critics. It was suggested that his arguments were too abstract and impractical, that his arguments were too polar a way of thinking and finally he had failed to deal with the question of mutuality and reciprocity. As a response to these criticisms Buber further refined his categories and in particular introduced the concept of dialogue in place of the concept of relation as his root metaphor. This may prove a more fruitful concept in a theological context.

To begin with, and in contrast to the categories of I-Thou and I-It, Buber's discussion of dialogue places greater emphasis on action and movement. This seems more in accord with the necessary movement between person and person in the Church and between the Church and God. Buber described two basic or primal movements in human interaction: moving toward others through dialogue, or away from them and back to ourselves through monologue. Buber also expanded on the dialectical connection between our actions and our attitude, speaking of a "circle of essential action and essential attitude" (Buber M. *Between Man and Man*, New York, Macmillan, 1965, p.22). Just as our actions determine our basic attitude, our attitude simultaneously shapes the way that we act. Through the Hebrew concept of *teshuvah* (turning) Buber emphasized the element of choice and responsibility in interhuman encounters. He also introduced, in contrast to the sharply dichotomous discussion of relation and experience in *I and Thou*, the element of gradation first, in respect of different degrees of "reflexion" (*Rückbiegung*) and secondly in respect of different

degrees or stages in the movement towards dialogue. One can simply focus attention on the other; one can act so as to make the other present; or one can enter into a full dialogical relationship with the other through the act of "inclusion" (Umfassung), experiencing the situation from the position of the other as well as from one's own position.

Buber also asserted that dialogue entails a process of address and response. He taught that signs continually address us in our daily lives, signs which are imbedded in ordinary events:

"Signs happen to us without respite, living means being addressed, we would need only to present ourselves and to perceive " (Buber M. Between Man and Man, New York, Macmillan, 1965, p.10), although these do not require spoken language: two strangers passing on the street can "reveal to one another two dialogical natures without ever exchanging a word" (ibid). Buber further believed that our responsiveness to being addressed by everyday situations is the key to transcending our alienated condition. This links in with Zizioulas' conception of freedom:

"True being comes only from the free person, from the person who loves freely - that is, who freely affirms his being, his identity, by means of an event of communion with other persons " (Zizioulas J. p.18).

Only the truly free person can be truly responsive in everyday situations. Not that everyone is aware of this because "each of us is encased in an armour whose task is to ward off signs" (ibid). (Buber M. Between Man and Man, New York, Macmillan, 1965 p.10) Zizioulas comments upon this situation:

"And even when he lives the event of communion in the form of love or of social and political life, he is obliged in the last analysis, if he wants

to survive, to relativize his freedom, to submit to certain natural and social 'givens' " (op.cit.p.19).

Such a person lives a monological existence and fails to actualise the fundamental human drive, which Buber now referred to as the drive to commune (Betrieb der Verbundenheit).

Buber's categories also throw light on Zizioulas' ideas concerning the role of the Holy Spirit. In placing greater emphasis on action and movement in dialogue, Buber allows us to see how the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Church operates, between the Holy Spirit and Christian persons in terms of this two-way dialogue of movement and response.

Zizioulas has alluded to the dead-end into which the Western Church has got itself in respect of Pneumatology so that it has singularly failed to reflect in a logical way upon the dynamics of the Church as a human community under the vivification of the Holy Spirit. Openness might be said to be a keynote in effective human relationships, and Buber elaborates on this. Buber enables us to see that openness to one another is a key to God's working within us. This can sound like a well-meaning platitude unless it is given teeth by actually defining how that openness, that dialogic relationship functions in practice for the building up of the Body of Christ. The refining of the categories of I and Thou which Buber undertook in the years following its publication helps us to refine the characteristics of true dialogue and thus open up further depths for the operation of the Holy Spirit.

For example through his introduction of an element of gradualism in respect of dialogue, Buber enables us to understand Christian life, dialogical living as growth and development in the power of the Spirit, as the "circle of essential action and essential

attitude" (Buber M. Between Man and Man, New York, Macmillan, 1965, p.22). In talking of the changes which are brought about in us by the Spirit, what better phrase could describe it than "Umfassung", experiencing the situation from the position of the other. A fully mutual relationship necessitates that each person lives through the common event from the standpoint of the other: to see things from God's standpoint and from the other person's and to understand that the two aspects of "Umfassung" go together, as Buber consistently maintains.

Buber's idea that dialogue entails a process of address and response through signs in our daily lives illuminate the existential process whereby God addresses us in the ordinary events of life in such a way as to speak his word to us through events and persons. Understood in this way, sanctification conceived as the fullness of life in the Holy Spirit within Christ's Church, can be seen as responsiveness to the address of the Spirit in all signs imbedded in our daily lives. One is reminded of the soul of Hasidism as conceived by Buber:

"Around each man - enclosed within the wide sphere of his activity - is laid a natural circle of things which, before all, he is called upon to set free " (Buber M. The Legends of the Baal Shem, New York, Schocken, 1969 p.47).

Address and response characterise the Christian community, where otherness is identical with communion:

"The individualisation of human existence which results in division and separation is now transformed into existence in communion, where the otherness of persons ('On each of them separately' Acts 2. 3) is identical with communion within a body " (Zizioulas J. p.112).

In relation to dialogue Buber further refined his categories in a way which assists our theme. He eventually came to recognise the basic ambiguity of his original concept of relation, because relation could easily be taken to mean "a lasting disposition which is actualised in those happenings between two individuals as comrades, but also a lasting disposition which is actualised in those happenings and which even includes psychological events such as the recollection of the absent comrade." (Buber M. The Knowledge of Man - Selected Essays, New York, Harper & Row, 1965, p.75). With the additional concepts of dialogue and the interhuman Buber was able to distinguish more clearly between a relationship in the broad sense and the process by which mutual interaction between people occurs. It is important here to note that interhuman relations are not primarily a matter of feeling but consist of actual lived encounters.

It is this emphasis which is helpful here when related to the nature of the Church. In the West, it has often seemed that the nature of the Church has been defined purely in terms of Word and/or Sacrament and not as communion or fellowship. As well as being a major theme for Zizioulas we noted earlier that Moltmann elaborates this theme in relation to the Reformation (See The Church in the Power of the Spirit, London, SCM, 1977, p.314 ff.).

Moltmann spells out the practical nature of fellowship. Buber has maintained that interhuman relations are concerned with actual lived encounters and not simply feelings. Moltmann would seem to concur with this in respect of the lived encounters between christian and christian. Moltmann further concurs with Buber's statement about feelings not being the basis of interhuman relations by suggesting that this friendship of the Christian fellowship cannot be terminated even by "unfriendliness", because it is the friendship of Jesus.

In a footnote (ibid p.398 n.36), Moltmann quotes Karl Barth, who defines the reality of God:

"The Being of God as the One who loves in Freedom " (cf. Church Dogmatics II, par.. 28, pp,257 ff.).

And Moltmann adds:

"By this he means God as man's friend."

Buber further clarified his concept of dialogue by introducing such terms as regard, accept and confirm. As Silberstein observes:

"As a prerequisite to a genuine dialogue, one must turn to another, regard the other as a unique individual, accept the other in his or her differentness, and address the other as the very person that he or she is." (Silberstein p.147).

Echoing Moltmann, however, Buber stresses that this process does not presuppose agreement with the other person. In spite of conflict of views, if we relate to the other person in a fully human way, genuine dialogue may emerge. If we recognise the person's uniqueness dialogue can occur in spite of disagreement. Our argument throughout has been that only a truly personal model of the Church is helpful, a model which is based on the dialogic interactions of God's people as reflecting the life of the personal God. If we are able to adopt this personal model of the Church we will be able to more easily accept this dialogical way of interacting as outlined by Buber, whereby genuine differences may be accepted and worked through.

This understanding of the uniqueness of the personal and its dialogical implications has been well expounded by the present Pope in his philosophical treatise The Acting Person (Wojtyla K. Dordrecht, 1979, p.287). There he advocated "the principle of

dialogue" as "very aptly suited to the structure of human communities." He tells us that "the principle of dialogue allows us to select and bring to light what in controversial situations is right and true; dialogue, in fact, without evading the strains, the conflicts or the strife manifest in the life of various communities takes up what is right and true in these differences, what may become a source of good for men."

Silberstein further elaborates how Buber refined his ideas (Silberstein p.148):

"Whereas, in earlier discussions, Buber had spoken of the fundamental human drive as the drive to relate and commune, he now spoke of the fundamental need to confirm and be confirmed."

Buber distinguished, however, between confirming and accepting another:

"In accepting the other, a person simply accepts what appears to him or her at the moment. To confirm, however, the person must penetrate behind appearances to the actual, vital self of the other. Confirmation is a dynamic process that entails the growth of the other ... The concept of confirming the other represents an important development in Buber's later thought. It reflects a more active interpretation of human relationships. Unlike the verbs relate and commune, the verb confirm is transitive. When we confirm one another we act upon him or her directly, thereby helping the other to draw out his or her unique potential" (ibid).

This introduction of the dynamic element in human relations certainly elucidates a theme we have previously observed in Zizioulas, namely the eschatological nature of ecclesial identity, which he also calls the sacramental or eucharistic hypostasis. We need to keep in mind, however, the differences as well as the similarities here. It is

true that becoming is basic to Buber's view of the human person, an idea he has directly absorbed from Nietzsche, who subtitles his work Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is. Buber, however, leaves it at that, whereas Zizioulas sees the person's becoming in terms of rebirth into the ecclesial identity:

"not as that which he is but as that which he will be; the ecclesial identity is linked with eschatology, that is, with the final outcome of his existence consequently there is no question of the ecclesial hypostasis emerging as a result of an evolution of the human race, whether biological or historical " (Zizioulas J. p.59).

For Zizioulas the dynamism of the ecclesial identity arises from the operation of the Holy Spirit who operates within existential personal relations, the ministries of the Church.

But the similarity also extends further: as well as an inherent dynamism both believe that assembly is equally important. The ecclesial hypostasis is inconceivable without others, without "a community, a network of relations, a synaxis" (op.cit.p.60). Buber breaks with his precursors, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard in insisting that one actualises oneself only through relations to others and in confirming the other.

In talking of actual lived encounters within the Church we are talking of ministry, which Tillich conceives as a type of mediation. (Systematic Theology. Vol. III, London, James Nisbet, 1964 pp.201 ff.)

The Orthodox perspective here, however, yields a somewhat different ethos from Tillich, because it emphasises the ascetical element. We move forward under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in an ascetical movement which implies that actualising

ourselves through relations to others requires a supernatural death and rebirth. As Zizioulas observes:

"It is for this reason that I stated previously that neither eros nor the body must be abandoned but must be hypostasized according to the 'mode of existence' of the ecclesial hypostasis " (op.cit.p.63).

In this context Buber's concept of confirming the other is further clarified by his idea of "imagining the real":

"Applied to the intercourse between men, imagining the real means that I imagine to myself what another man is at this very moment wishing, feeling, perceiving, thinking, and not as a detached content, but in his very reality, that is, as a living process in this man " (Knowledge of Man - Selected Essays, New York, Harper & Row, 1965, p.70).

However, Buber maintains that it is necessary to go even beyond this - to what he calls "making present" - if one is to attain genuine dialogue. To do this, I must actually experience what another person is experiencing at a particular moment: I must

"experience in the particular approximation of the given moment, the experience belonging to him as this very one" (op.cit.p.71).

Silberstein comments (p.150):

"An example of making present is to actually feel the pain of the other. When this occurs, something new comes into being. This is not simply psychological, but ontological. It is not simply that the other becomes a self for me, but he or she becomes a self 'with me'. Dialogue becomes 'ontologically complete' only when the experience is mutually shared. For this to occur, the other must know that he or she is made present

by me and experience 'inmost self becoming ' (Buber M. Knowledge of Man, p.71)."

Tillich would no doubt agree that true mediation in the power of the Spiritual Presence is not possible without "making present" the feelings of the other person, the dialogue becoming "ontologically" complete. Indeed one may see a certain convergence in Buber's idea that when true dialogue occurs something new comes into being with Tillich's idea of mediation in the Spirit bringing into existence a new relationship between the persons involved.

With this concept in mind, Buber is further able to clarify his understanding of love. In his earlier discussion of love, Buber had emphasized it as the responsibility of an I for a Thou. But in his later writings, he asserts that, while each accepts the other, this does not mean that neither wants the other to change. To love another is to recognise and address the other's potential for growth:

"Just by my accepting love, I discover in you what you are meant to become " (op.cit.p,182).

This must surely be axiomatic for the christian within the ecclesial community. Not only do we perceive and celebrate our own new life in Christ, rooted ontologically in the future, but we also experience and celebrate it for others, thereby assisting their ascetic movement towards the goal. When, as Zizioulas observes, the eucharistic community keeps alive the memory of a loved one, ... it proceeds to an act of ontology. This "keeping alive", while essentially eucharistic, must include every aspect of our life with that person, it must include an ongoing, accepting love, a sharing of all that I am with all that the other person is and can become. Buber does not perceive

fully the Christian dimension of existence, but he partially glimpses it. It is this glory that Zizioulas painstakingly elaborates.

Buber sought to clarify the concept of mutuality. In I and Thou Buber had distinguished between reciprocity and mutuality. He used reciprocity for any situation in which each being acts on the other, and mutuality for a situation in which one experiences an event both from one's own side and from that of the other. Now he conceded that there were degrees of mutuality. For example our relationship to inanimate matter he describes as the prethreshold of mutuality, whereas in I and Thou he had distinguished various levels of relationship with inanimate, spiritual and human. Mutuality is, for Buber, a prerequisite for full dialogue. Confronting the other as a distinct person is necessary but not sufficient. By accepting a person and confirming his or her otherness, we open the way to trust. However, for genuine dialogue to occur, mutual address must also take place. Buber also elaborates the impediments to mutuality, as Silberstein comments:

"Frequently, in conversation with another, while seeming to be fully present, we calculate the effect or impact of our words on the other. In so doing, we actually hold ourselves back from being fully present and from confirming the other as the one that he or she is. Moreover if, in our relations with others, we absolutize ourselves while relativising the other, we preclude the mutuality that dialogue requires. In both these instances, we have monologue pretending to be dialogue " (Silberstein p.152).

And if this is true of some transactions in the Church, that they are monologue, rather than dialogue, we are asserting that it is very difficult for these to be open to the

operation of the Holy Spirit, since they do not allow Him that personal locus which is an important sphere of the divine economy. In this context and referring again to Tillich, hierarchicalism is an excellent example of this type of monologue. The hierarchs' assumption that they speak for the Holy Spirit, indeed can become his oracles, is deeply unchristian, being founded on an incapacity or refusal to receive themselves. It asserts that only they receive directly from the Holy Spirit and not through the ministry of other christians:

"If a church demands receptiveness of its members but itself as a church refuses to receive, it becomes ... a static hierarchical system " (Tillich P.

Systematic Theology, Vol. III, London, James Nisbet, 1964 p.201).

Buber further refined his ideas by stating that in making the above distinction between dialogue and presence, we need to look to the governing intention, the attitude with which we enter into the conversation:

"Genuine dialogue entails a unity of heart, mouth, and mind, of feeling, intention, and action " (ibid).

Another impediment to genuine dialogue occurs whenever we assume an analytic, reductive, objective stance to another person. By focusing on one aspect of the person rather than the totality, we reduce and restrict the other's wholeness. Similarly we impede genuine dialogue whenever we seek to influence the way in which the other perceives us:

"Buber demonstrates this by contrasting 'being' to 'seeming'. Whereas the 'being' person is spontaneous and unreserved, the 'seeming' person contrives a particular appearance in order to appear in a particular way,

to present a particular image, or to have a particular effect " (op.cit,p. 153).

"Whatever the meaning of the word 'truth' in other realms, in the interhuman realm it means that men communicate themselves to one another as what they are letting no seeming creep in between themselves and the other." (Buber M. The Knowledge of Man - Selected Essays, New York, Harper & Row, 1965, p.77).

Buber's idea concerning the "being" person seems to fit in well with what Zizioulas has to say about the true hypostasis of the person. Our society appears to be returning to the pagan conception of the "person", to the mask of the Greeks and the "legal" person of the Romans; the playing of a role, to use an acting metaphor, to "seeming" rather than to "being". Both Zizioulas and Buber, starting from a personal theological background, bring our modern thinking back to "being" rather than "seeming". "Being" for Buber is synonymous with truth, authenticity and genuineness. A relationship is true or genuine when one relates to another without pretence, in other words, without seeming. In a sense being for Zizioulas is about truth, authenticity and genuineness, but for him Jesus Christ is truth, authenticity and genuineness and these virtues in us flow from our being "in Christ". Zizioulas has acknowledged the problem that Buber eloquently describes:

"Uniqueness is relativised in social life, and man becomes ... a useful 'object', a 'combination', a 'persona' (Zizioulas J. p.47).

And he continues:

"Diffused today throughout all forms of social life is the intense search for personal identity."

We might add, the search for "being" rather than "seeming". Zizioulas' answer to the problem is quite clear. Our unique identity consists in loving and being loved by God, participation in the personal existence of God through baptism and rebirth in the Church:

"Jesus Christ realises in history the very reality of the person and makes

it the basis and 'hypostasis' of the person for every man " (op.cit.p.54).

Christ allows us to "be", in his perfect image, rather than to "seem" according to defective human nature, which through its inherent defects, makes human beings to be hypocrites, wearing its mask.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

It was suggested in the Introduction³⁹ that Zizioulas' Eastern idiom might require some reworking or expansion along more Western lines - a retranslation. It has been the argument of the last three chapters that Buber's categories can be used as an intermediary in this process again. It was observed in the Introduction⁴⁰ that, while esteeming Buber's insights, Zizioulas parts company with Buber on the grounds that communion is not a relationship understood for its own sake. In the last chapter it was argued that Buber himself moved away from this position in his later writings and modified much that he had earlier set out in I and Thou. Paul McPartlan (The Eucharist Makes the Church, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1993 p. 274) observes, in relation to Buber:

"Zizioulas will not reject a system in which substance is primary only to embrace one in which communion is, for both deny the priority of the particular, the primacy of the person,"

but he also comments in a footnote:

"In what may be seen as a defence of Buber against this criticism by Zizioulas, Balthasar comments about the 'I-Thou' relationship that Buber does not erect it 'into a general univocal principle', it is ... a principle which Buber regards as decisively indicative of the relationship of the creature to God ' (Martin Buber and Christianity, p. 13)".

It has also been observed in the last two chapters that Buber's categories expand and illuminate Zizioulas' general ecclesiological line and thereby further the understanding

³⁹ See P. 16

⁴⁰ See P. 19

of the person in the Church from an ontological point of view, and have practical relevance in terms of ecclesiastical polity. A comparison has been made between Zizioulas and Buber to bring out first the common philosophical ground⁴¹ and, secondly, the more developed ideas concerning koinonia and community⁴² (op.cit.p. 275).

Paul McPartlan comments:

"Zizioulas' approach may be characterised as one which seeks to reset the bones of theology. Much flesh needs to be put upon these reset bones. For instance, having reset the Eucharist at the centre of the Christian life and the other sacraments within it, Zizioulas must show not only how to rehabilitate the Ministry of the Word and the Church's mission to humanity, but also how to elaborate what he admits that the Eastern tradition can seem to ignore, namely 'the ethical implications of the Eucharist in particular and sacramental life in general.' ('Eschatology and History' in Wieser T. Ed. Cultures in Dialogue, Geneva W. C. C., 1985 pp.30-39). His preoccupation with stressing that ethics are not the bones of Christianity has so far prevented him from providing even ethical flesh for the sacramental bones. Having stated that 'an entire sociological theory and practice can be developed out of the Eucharist' (ibid) it is particularly important that he, as an Eastern theologian, shows how, because, as he himself says, the risk which traditionally faces the East is that of 'undermining mission and involvement in history

⁴¹ See Chapter III

⁴² See Chapter IV

and being satisfied with a beautiful liturgy without bothering to draw its social and ethical implications ' (ibid)" (op.cit.pp.298-299).

With respect to Zizioulas' relational approach to the Church and the Eucharist, it may be asserted that Buber provides a firm basis for the fleshing out of the reset bones. That Buber's line of argument is primarily ethical is clear enough. He is concerned with authentic living, living in relation with integrity, achieving self fulfilment and the fulfilment of others.⁴³ In the Introduction it was stated that the relationship between the two would be examined, in terms of the autonomous human subject, as understood in contemporary terms and the interface with the community of believers.⁴⁴ Buber provides a way in to understand that relationship in terms of an ethical or moral process. Silberstein expresses this moral element in Buber by insisting that Buber is an "edifying philosopher"⁴⁵

McPartlan provides a very useful overview of Zizioulas' Ecclesiology, and furthermore posits some interesting models to understand the latter more easily. In explaining Zizioulas' theory of the one-many structure of communion he uses the model of a spider's web:

"... in which the web of relations links the beings represented by its junctions or points. A marked advantage of this model is that link is readily seen to be too weak a term, for a point in a network of lines is defined by the lines which meet there, joining it to other points. Here the relational web constitutes the points, as junctions; no point exists until there are such relational lines. Relationship or communion is ontologically decisive" (op.cit.p.274).

⁴³ See P. 96 ff.

⁴⁴ See P. 22

⁴⁵ See P. 187

And he continues:

"Moreover, the model has a definite structure. If Zizioulas simply said that being results from communion, then a simple lattice would serve as a model " (ibid).

In respect of God the Father as centre with Christians in relation to Him Charles Williams seems to glimpse a similar truth. In reflecting on Dante's *Vita Nuova* he says:

"Dante is on the circumference, and the things that happen there make a difference to him; he has with them no fixed and always equal relation: only he sees the centre. The Love of the "New Life" is in the centre; to it all parts of the circumference, all time, all experiences, have this equal relation but beyond that it is the state when there is, in effect no circumference; or rather, every point of the circumference is at the centre, for the circumference itself is *caritas*, and relation is only between the centre and the centre. This is love-in-heaven " (He Came Down from Heaven, London, Faber and Faber, 1950 p.76).

One may draw on both Zizioulas' picture of the Church and add to it the insights of Buber concerning the ethical manner in which persons grow more to be junctions within the cobweb. This is described in the previous chapter. This indeed fleshes out Zizioulas' skeleton and partially achieves Zizioulas' desire to develop a sociological theory and practice for the Eucharist.

Furthermore it is necessary to return to the pneumatological emphasis because it is this that provides the necessary link between Zizioulas' Ecclesiology and Buber's existential phenomenology of relation because it personalises the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church. We may ask the question which McPartlan does not ask: namely, what is the

role and function of the Holy Spirit in facilitating the growth of the relational lines that make up the spider's web, which is McPartlan's model of the Church? If the relational web constitutes the points, how does this come about, and also how does it grow and develop? If we are talking about networks how does this operate in practice, and is this something that will aid Christians to understand their own lives within the Church and relations therein?

We have previously observed⁴⁶ that the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church is the reversing and overcoming of autonomy and the healing of the destructive effects of it on an individual person and persons in community. It is through the Holy Spirit that Christ is not an individual. He can only be understood in the terms of personhood, which are existential and relational terms. Personhood is ontologically linked with communion.

Zizioulas says:

"It is noteworthy that it is the function of the Holy Spirit to open up being so that it may become relational " (Zizioulas p.182, n 37).

It is precisely this that is crucial to the link with Buber. In respect of human beings this opening up of being is not just ontological, but it involves the dynamics of human relations in their social, ethical and cultural setting. We are here dealing with human beings, who are active agents in this process by the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷

Within Zizioulas' conception of the Church, as described by McPartlan in terms of a spider's web, we may observe that the dynamics of transaction in the Church community is integral to God's reconciling act. Zizioulas' emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit invites us to reflect upon how God, by the agency of his people, fulfils

⁴⁶ See P. 81 ff.

⁴⁷ See P. 74 ff.

His saving work in the world. If we ask the question: how does the Holy Spirit operate this process of reconciliation we may attempt to answer by pointing to Buber's analysis of dialogue. Within the reconciling community the Holy Spirit is literally the life and soul of the process of dialogue - opening up people to one another. It is this which Buber has so painstakingly described. We saw in the last chapter that, in order to meet the real needs of humankind, Buber emphasises the existential elements within religion, which is precisely what Zizioulas does as well. The Holy Spirit is in the Church sanctifying people by their mutual ministry. What has not been sufficiently accounted for in the past is the very "mutuality" of that ministry, the human dialogic relationships which are a process taking place in all our lives as Christians. This process is a composite thing involving our personal psychology, social, ethical and cultural matters and the ethos of our local church community. But the Holy Spirit works with this complex process, works to bring about the building up of the Body of Christ.

The process described above, the complex web of factors which make up our human relating are marked by the old Adam, the alienating effects of sin that Zizioulas and Buber have described.⁴⁸ The Holy Spirit liberates the Church and Christians from these historical impediments through an ascetical process bringing the last days into history.⁴⁹ The Holy Spirit does this because He makes real Christ's personal existence as a body or community, and in so doing reveals His own Person, His own personal being.⁵⁰ This understanding of God's mode of operating demands, however, the People of God fully acknowledging their responsibility to act as a reconciling community, that Christian life in toto is the work of the Church. The Christian life consists of all aspects of our daily

⁴⁸ See P. 30 ff. and P.96 ff.

⁴⁹ See P. 46 ff.

⁵⁰ See P. *ibid.*

life: our families, friends and neighbours, our varied associations, and also our life in the workplace. In terms of time and the commitment of energy, this may be the most significant aspect of many people's lives. Of course, this acknowledgement will itself be by the inspiration or indwelling of the Spirit, but not in the sense of the Holy Spirit as an object of consciousness but rather the Spirit becoming for the community the environment in which it lives.

Within Zizioulas' eschatological and pneumatological perspective, all theology and experience must be regarded as provisional within the light of God's final summation. While Christian experience has a firm foundation through its incorporation into Christ, it is nevertheless, like all human experience open-ended. This means that Christian experience, indeed the Christian community must be open to investigation or insights of any kind, sociological and psychological.

It has been the contention of this essay that the thinking of Martin Buber particularly assists this process, since purely sociological or psychological criteria do not fully address the unique interhuman sphere which is the locus of the Spirit's activity. The locus of the work of the Spirit is, in Buber's terminology, the speaking of the primary word in a unique faith- event.

This fleshing out of Zizioulas' theology through the uniquely personal categories of Buber may be seen in relation to sin, seen as the enemy of communion. Buber manages to elaborate the fallen state of mankind in such a way as to broaden the notion as estrangement from other human beings, the world and God.⁵¹ By spelling out the personal, social, political and cosmic aspects of this alienation, he lends force to Zizioulas' argument that;

⁵¹ See P. 109 ff.

"To reveal Christ's whole Body in history to meet the demonic powers of division which operate in history " (Zizioulas p.10).

Zizioulas argues for a catholicity which is dynamic and total because catholicity is not an ethical achievement but a reality in the person of Christ. (See Carr W. "A Theology of the Holy Spirit" in Torrance T. F. & Reid J. K. S. Eds. Scottish Journal of Theology Vol. 28, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1975 p.510-516):

"We may further remind ourselves that the very ordinariness of Jesus and of the Church constantly points to the possibilities which are available to God in all that is ordinary. If a Spirit-Christology is accepted, this motif is very much strengthened. If God in his unique action in Christ took what is and transformed it, then that exclusive act has within it universal possibilities which include all that is. The principle may be extended. The whole world of men is available as the object of God's activity, and yet that special activity is seen in the person of Christ and the fact of the Christian community " (op.cit.pp. 515-516).

We may confidently assert that Buber wholeheartedly embraces the cosmic vision, which for him is expressed in the Lurianic myths existentially reinterpreted, but he has no real sense of the eschatological dimension. This should not surprise us because the idea of an immanent Spirit of God is lacking. But even this disparity sheds light on the Jewish-Christian dialogue. It was noted previously,⁵² however, that both thinkers have an element of surprise in their categories. In Zizioulas it is occasioned by the

⁵² See P. 46 ff.

in-breaking of the Spirit, while in Buber it is occasioned by the newness of the idea of helping relationships.

The idea of fragmented existence has a close parallel with Buber. Buber observes a constant tendency to slip back into individualism, a "constitutional" inability to sustain the transcendence of individualism permanently. This perspective once and for all demolishes any idea of the Church "skating" over history unmarked or untouched by human weakness. Triumphalism may be seen for the perversion of Ecclesiology which it is. Charles Williams comments:

"The Church (it was early decided) was not an organisation of sinless men but of sinful, not a union of adepts or illuminati but of those that sat in darkness. Nevertheless, it carried within it an energy not its own, and it knew what it believed about that energy " (He Came Down From Heaven, London, Faber and Faber, 1950 p.84).

It does not take much knowledge of Church history to recognise that ecclesiastical arrogance and particularly hierarchical arrogance as the desire to give, but the refusal to receive.⁵³ Again Williams comments:

"The Divine Thing that made itself the foundation of the Church does not seem, to judge by his comments on the religious leaders of the day, ever to have hoped for much from officers of a church. The most he would do was promise that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. It is about all that, looking back on the history of the church, one can feel they have not done " (op.cit.p.78).

⁵³ See P. 79 ff.

Zizioulas' view of the correct attitude may be described by Tillich's conception of "mediation", which is extremely close to Buber's mature conception of dialogue.⁵⁴

Indeed Buber goes so far as to say that;

"The hope for the hour depends upon the renewal of dialogical immediacy " (Pointing the Way - Collected Essays, New York, Harper, 1957 p.228) . Could one paraphrase by saying "the hope for the Church"?

We may see a parallel between the problems of hierarchicalism and Buber's views on education.⁵⁵ In so doing we do not remove the comparison from an ecclesial or communitarian perspective because, for Buber, education was about nurturing community:

"Genuine education of character is education for community "
(Between Man and Man, New York, Macmillan, 1965 p.116).

While he recognised the child's capacity for creativity, he denied it is the fundamental drive, which is to commune. Buber clarifies his concept of education by contrasting it with propaganda. Education is about drawing out innate inclinations and qualities through actualisation in life situations. The educator must see each individual person as a unique and single person and "thus the bearer of a special task of existence which can be fulfilled through him alone " (The Knowledge of Man - Selected Essays, New York, Harper & Row, 1967 p.83). In contrast the propagandist imposes his will and dehumanises those with whom he or she comes into contact.

The ecclesiastical hierarch similarly subordinates individual persons to a programme. We may observe the dehumanising effects of such attitudes upon individual people,

⁵⁴ See P. 80 ff.

⁵⁵ See also P. 138

especially those engaged in full-time ministry. The minister may often, for example, find himself the go-between, between hierarchy and people. This is in itself an isolating position to be in. The minister may feel that "programmes" which come down from above are unrealistic or unrealisable. In addition to this the minister may feel isolated by his position in the institution, a position which may emphasise his "separateness" as a means of increasing hierarchical power. Victor de Waal comments ("What is Ordination?" in Dunstan G. Ed. The Sacred Ministry, London, SPCK, 1970 p.88);

"For many who are in positions of isolation, the old clerical piety, which accepted loneliness as part of the priestly vocation, no longer consoles.

For theirs is not the loneliness of the pioneer apostle but the isolation of those who sense that they are being squeezed out of society, which ... includes them in the same category as other antique and picturesque functionaries left over from a former age."

Furthermore, this situation will be exacerbated if the minister feels that he or she is being required to resist the impetus towards dialogue, since, for example, the views of the laity are seen as a threat by the hierarchy. This can, of course, work both ways, if the laity "set up" the minister to force their views on the hierarchy. In both cases dialogue has failed and forms of compulsion or manipulation are being used.

Again, the minister may be seduced into a "career" mode of thinking concerning his vocation, where career-advancement equates with achieving more power or influence. Disappointment may easily follow, leading to disillusion and the loss of a sense of vocation, or even alienation from the transcendent reference which gives the meaning to the ministry in the first place.

By contrast it is possible to apply Buber's model where the teacher/minister helps the other christian to actualise the inherent capacity to relate dialogically to the world and others. Buber objected to the exercise of compulsion and power in education. Compulsion for him bred alienation, although he did not deny the need for discipline, because the teacher serves as a link between the student and the outside world, a critic or instructor. This may be a better framework for seeing the exercise of discipline in the Church. The teacher-student relationship for Buber, precludes full mutuality because the teacher must, to some extent, stand back in order to help at all. This may be helpful in understanding leadership roles in the Church as necessitating some distance, but not a distance which alienates, but leads to the further educating of the educator.

In relation to what has been said above about hierarchicalism we may ask how ministry fits with our theological schema and within a programme for the renewal of "dialogical immediacy". We should expect to find that since Zizioulas' whole theological perspective is relational, and his vision of the Church is likewise, his ideas about ministry will be also. It is interesting to observe that McPartlan uses the image of the spider's web where:

"... the relational web constitutes the points, as junctions; no point exists until there are such relational lines "

(McPartlan The Eucharist Makes the Church, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1993 p. 274).⁵⁶ McPartlan goes on to observe that the model has a definite structure. It is at this point we see why Zizioulas' conception of "the one and the many" is so critical.

⁵⁶ See also Williams C, He Came Down From Heaven, London, Faber and Faber, 1950, especially pp.88-94.

Without "the one" we should not have a spider's web but a lattice. McPartlan summarises!

"The 'one' in God is the Father, thus the 'one' in corporate personality is not the total, overall unity, but the specific person at the heart of the 'many'. Moreover, the 'many' includes the 'one'; the 'one' is one of the 'many' and does not stand outside them. Thus, the 'many' in the Trinity are three (not two), just as, in ecclesiology, Christ is one of the Church " (op.cit.p.179).

McPartlan goes on to say that the archetype of corporate personality is the Trinity, in which the Father is the cause. So corporate personality has a structure.

It is true that Buber does not share Zizioulas' Christian vision of community as outlined by McPartlan because he does not share the latter's vision of the prime community, the Trinity. But this may be doing Buber somewhat of a disservice because he does make reference, as has been previously noted,⁵⁷ to a community, with its network of reciprocal relationship to a single, living centre. Because Buber is writing generically, with no particular community in mind he mentions various centres. But he is emphatic that, for community to come into being the presence of a centre is essential.

It does not take a great leap of imagination to see Buber's teaching on the centre as relevant to the Father surrounded by the Son and the Holy Spirit, Christ surrounded by the Church and the bishop surrounded by the local church. Since Buber is writing in the context of a faith-community and particularly makes reference to the Hasidic rebbe, it would not seem inappropriate to see the bishop in an analogous situation to the

⁵⁷ See Chapter IV especially P. 231 ff.

rebbe. Indeed among the various Jewish traditions the Hasidic rebbe occupies a critical and central role among the Hasidic adherents. Of the rebbe he writes:

"They saw one another through his eyes, and they touched one another through his eyes, and they touched one another through his hand. And since the things came to one another, there was no longer an abyss, but a light space of seeing and touching, and of all that was therein " (The Legends of the Baal Shem, New York, Schocken, 1969 p.70).

For Buber the leader of the community is the paradigm of a helping person, serving as the vehicle for bridging the abysses. Mutatis mutandis, this role may well be seen as applicable to the bishop as leader of the christian community.

Buber further elaborates this idea. In Paths in Utopia (Boston, Beacon Press, 1949 p 135) he refers to the members of a community having a common relation to the centre, overriding all other relations;

"... the circle is signified by the radii, not by the points of the periphery."

This statement significantly strengthens his earlier ideas and brings us close to McPartlan's cobweb because Buber's picture seems to resemble a wheel with spokes, or possibly a cobweb.

In relation to a faith-community Buber instances God, the Exodus or the rebbe as the centre. This seems to be in line with the incarnational tendency in Judaism to which Balthasar refers (See Martin Buber and Christianity - A Dialogue Between Israel and the Church, London, Harvill Press, 1961). The divine action has a tendency to incarnate itself in creation which Christianity sees reaching a climax in the Incarnation. Karl Rahner speaks of this "incarnational tendency of grace ." Theological

Investigations, Vol. II, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1967 p.119). In the main, Buber's "centres" are earthly and orientated to persons and personal relations, and local communities. There are again parallels with the importance Buber attaches to small communities in general and the kibbutzim in particular, where small local communities are established in that most important of locations, Israel. Locality seems here to be part and parcel of the incarnational tendency which Balthasar sees in Judaism in general and Buber in particular. If we may say that the Bishop is the "centre" of the local community, so we may see other ordained ministers performing a similar, if derivative, function within the cobweb of relations which forms a model of the Church. Zizioulas argues that the function of the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation is to open up being to be relational. He has also stressed that ordination can only be understood in these categories of personal existence. Indeed, he specifically refers to I and Thou to support his argument. (Zizioulas J. pp. 164-165). In this context it becomes quite clear that the ordained person cannot be understood without presupposing unity with other persons. The charisma of the ordained does not live outside the community within which the Holy Spirit is the bond of love.

In view of this we may ask what the specific task of the ordained minister is within the ministry of the whole Church. If the function of the Holy Spirit within the Church is to open up being to be relational, then we may say that the specific function of the ordained ministry may be seen as facilitating this "opening up" of Christians to one another within the *koinonia*, and also as facilitating this "opening up" to the world, what Zizioulas calls "ambassadorship". (op.cit.p.220). In this sense they act as "agents" of the Spirit, facilitating the operation of the relational web which is the Church.

Ordination either introduces someone into the web or alters their position within it.

And McPartlan comments ;

"Such moves are clearly transfers and not additions of anything"

(McPartlan P. The Eucharist Makes the Church, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1993 p.275)

and furthermore Zizioulas opposes any idea that in Ordination the conferred charism is subsequently possessed by the individual person. It exists in the horizontal web of ecclesial relations:

"The way to God has to pass through the relationship with the neighbour." (Zizioulas J. "The Early Christian Community" in McGinn B., Meyendorff J. & Leclercq J. Eds. Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986 p.37).

Thus McPartlan can comment ;

"The charismata are 'absolutely relational notions', that is, they pertain to each Christian specifically as a member of the local church " (The Eucharist Makes the Church, Edinburgh, T.& T.Clark, 1993 p.278).

So we return to the specific task of the ordained minister within the local church. It is here that we may suggest that the opening up of being to be relational is the exact opposite of what Buber refers to as alienation in its widest sense.

How do the ordained ministers facilitate the overcoming of alienation so that individual christians grow into the Body of Christ? It may be that we need to consider a further model here, a model of ministry, which will explain the specific task. Buber has elaborated what holds people apart both in emotional, political and social terms. The ministers themselves are not immune to these things. They have feelings of their own,

and have been formed by social attitudes and norms. A possible model which encompasses the above is a consultancy one, (an idea borrowed from the commercial and the secular world) where the ministers are interpreters rather than experts. (See Carr W. The Priestlike Task, London, SPCK., 1985 especially pp.13-18) Their skills are that they use what they feel and experience in their roles vis-à-vis the Eucharistic community to offer interpretations to those with whom they are working. The ministers' particular skill is to be able to hold apart what is being put into them from what was already there:

"He uses himself as a measure and his commitment is to enable those with whom he is working to understand what is happening and then to take their own authority for acting. This he does by offering interpretations which are built upon the evidence both of what all may see and hear and of what he experiences as happening to him " (op.cit.p. 15).

It is a major skill, and indeed a charism, to be able to hold a point of reference which transcends what is immediate without being detached from what is happening:

"Feelings can be very powerful the more intensely people share an experience, the more fragmented may become their grasp of a whole view. They then become preoccupied with what seems immediate and therefore important and may lose touch with what they represent and what they are there for " (ibid).

The ministers share the feelings of all, but consistently interprets them by relating them to the transcendent point of reference:

"We may, therefore, say that his authority lies in the fact that what he says and does is right. ... In taking this stance the minister exposes himself to scrutiny in such a way as to invite mutual exploring of perspectives and evidence. Mere dogmatism is thereby excluded. In addition, such authority is validated by its effect. Change will come about either through people accepting the interpretation and acting upon it or through their falsifying it and thus again acting, but in a different way." (op.cit.p.16).

This view of ministry seems to elucidate and expand the bare bones of Zizioulas' theology of ministry, particularly by explaining how the relational nature of ministry is linked to the particular ministerial charism and how it operates in practice. It is also seen to provide a model of how the one-many structure of Church and ministry functions. Not only is the one-many structure a mirror of the Trinity but also an effective and indispensable means of maintaining the unity by the "one" being able to hold a point of reference which transcends what is immediate, but without becoming detached from what is happening in the midst of the "many". This is also related to the local/universal perspective, since the "One", by being able to hold a point of reference which transcends what is immediate, enables the local community to keep hold of what is happening in the wider church, to hold onto the fact of the local church having a eucharistic identity with all the other churches, the "many". The above model relates quite clearly with Buber's conception of the role of the Hasidic Rebbe.

The local church must be immersed in its context, the community and culture in which it operates. But it cannot afford to lose sight of the transcendent reference. The minister will need to assist his local church in articulating an interpretation of their

communal situation. In speaking of the coincident unity-in-identity of the local churches, Zizioulas sees them as "held apart in unity, such that each can fulfil its task, which is to engage all the particularities of a given geographical locality, in order to transcend them, 'by bringing all these natural and cultural particularities up to God in the unity of the one Body of His Son'". (Zizioulas p.280). The bishop/minister acts as a point of exchange between one local church and another, such that the overall task of the whole church may be defined in the context of the eucharistic event.

The minister also acts as an interpreter in relation to what Zizioulas calls the "ambassadorial" role of the Christian community. (See Zizioulas p.220) From the eucharist, the Pentecostal gathering, Christians "return to the world rejoicing and full of charisms" (Zizioulas J. "Le vision eucharistique du monde et l'homme contemporain" in Contacts 19, 1967 p.91), which they will exercise there by extension ("L'euchariste: quelques aspects bibliques" in Zizioulas J., Tillard J. M. R. & von Allmen J. J. L'euchariste, églises en dialogue 12; Mame, 1970 p.46). If the Christian is to exercise his or her charisms "by extension" they will require ministerial guidance in the sense of interpreting the theological in terms of their everyday life and experience.

In reflecting upon the nature of ministry in the Church we are led inevitably to reflect upon how Buber's views on education throws light on hierarchicalism. If ministerial structures in the Church need to be open to the relational as the sphere of the operation of the Spirit it follows that these structures can hardly be authoritarian, for this would be to give the ultimate power to some person or group which would constitute a denial of the provisionality of the community's existence. Equally a system based on majority voting, such as synodical government in the Church of England, cannot constitute the charismatic structure, for this is necessarily divisive and there can

be no room in a community which claims a unity given by the Spirit for a public recognition of divisiveness as a way of life. In the light of the above interpreter model the minister's authority lies in the truth and perceptiveness of what he or she says. But this is not authoritarian since, in taking this stance, the minister exposes himself or herself to scrutiny in such a way as to invite mutual exploring of perspectives and evidence. In this perspective mere dogmatism is excluded, for such authority is validated by its effect. And indeed the minister in such a role is vulnerable, depending upon his subjective perception of what is happening, upon his ability to hold onto the task, upon his ability to interpret what is happening, upon his articulation of his interpretation and upon his commitment to being scrutinised by others. The drift into subjectivism and eccentricity is an ever-present danger without the charism of ordination. Intimacy is a feature of christian ministry, being close to people and groups, sharing their experiences and receiving their expectations. And yet the ministers must distance themselves in order to appreciate what is happening, being able to hold a total view of the church, their tasks and yet at the same time to immerse themselves in a wide range of experienced feelings. In order to evaluate ministry the ordained person becomes subject and object, thinking of himself or herself as a measuring instrument. In all this great integrity is required. Indeed the transcending of subject and object may be seen as the aim of Buber's intellectual corpus. And within a pneumatological perspective the same would be true - the aim of Christian life is oneness with God and neighbours in a communion of love, the transcending of subject and object.

But this personalist and relational approach also has implications for the problem of the Church and churches, namely the ecumenical dimension of modern ecclesiology.

Zizioulas is at pains to point out that the early Church consisted of local churches which were truly catholic in embracing all cultures. He also argues that a confessional Church, a "denomination" "is the most disincarnate entity there is" (op.cit.p.260), and he adds (ibid):

"We must be prepared to question the ecclesial status of confessional churches as such, and begin to work on the basis of the nature of the local Church. ... Taking the reality of the local Church and its theology more seriously than we have done so far may prove to be of extreme importance to the ecumenical movement."

If anything this is a decided understatement on Zizioulas' part, since in embryo he has put a theological time-bomb under confessionalism, removing decisively its ecclesiological validity. The principle of locality was also affirmed by Karl Rahner, (Theological Investigations Vol. II, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963 pp. 290-291, 306-307) who argues that the Church of Christ has been a local church from its beginnings, a community of local dioceses under their local bishops who are not just functionaries of the Pope.

Taking the local church seriously in the ecclesiological debate is underlined by Zizioulas' personalist and relational approach. The local for him is a small unit where interpersonal relations are possible and with the bishop as the Centre. This facilitates, as far as is possible, face-to-face relations, a point made also by Buber. For, although the latter considered the relationship to the Centre to be essential for genuine community, it was not sufficient. The members of a community must also engage in reciprocal relations. Like marriage, Buber taught that genuine community requires relationships of responsibility among its members. Community is not a static form or

structure but a dynamic process, a point well worth bearing in mind in relation to church structures, and one which of necessity flows from the provisional nature of institutions within the eschatological perspective. Buber taught that as long as there ~~are direct relations~~ among members of a group and with a common centre, one can speak of community; when these direct relations decline, so does community. What is quite clear from the foregoing is that such prerequisites can only exist locally. Once one moves away from the local, the whole enterprise evaporates in abstractions, Zizioulas' "disincarnate entity" of the confessional church.

To clarify the concept of community further, Buber contrasted it with two other categories, society and the interhuman, categories we have previously discussed. He is insistent that community is neither of these. This is also important for the local church: it is neither simply a lattice of interpersonal relations nor a structure, analogous to a society. Indeed the "denomination" has about it more the aspect of a society. Accordingly, community, as Buber used the word, refers simultaneously to a social context and an existential situation between persons, but always local. Buber's conception was supported by Victor Turner (See The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure, New York, Cornell University Press, 1977):

"Communitas has an existential quality; it involves the whole man in his relation to other whole men " (op.cit.p.127);

and again;

"Buber lays his finger on the spontaneous, immediate, concrete nature of communitas " (ibid).

It is possible to see here echoes of the pneumatological or charismatic structure of the Church where the emphasis is upon inner dynamism rather than static structure.

Turner acknowledges that community is difficult to achieve and can revert to structure. But he believes that community will always "break in through the interstices of structure " (ibid).

One is here reminded of Tillich's notion of "Spiritual Community" and that is only achievable through the Spiritual Presence. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee (absent from the purely secular sphere) that the Church will not revert definitively and finally into a static and institutionalised structure. Buber's mature conception of community "fleshes out" the bare bones of Zizioulas' emphasis upon the local church, the existential event where the corporate Christ of the *Parousía* encounters local eucharistic assemblies and "tabernacles" (McPartlan P. The Eucharist makes the Church, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1993 p.265).

The hope was expressed in the Introduction⁵⁸ that through Buber some connections might be made between contemporary philosophy and theology. While the language of the Greek Fathers may sound alien to modern ears, it is not so far removed from contemporary human experience because the basic human nature which gave rise to it has not changed. And the Fathers were essentially concerned with providing answers to the human predicament. Their answers are practical and related to real life experiences because they were practical and pastoral people. As much as any contemporary philosophers they were concerned about what made for authentic human existence, and for them the answer to the conundrum of human existence was Jesus Christ.

Zizioulas, with his radical ideas derived from the Greek Fathers, cuts a swathe through much modern debate, especially the fundamental point that true knowledge is not

⁵⁸ See P. 17

knowledge of things, but of how they are connected in the communion event. We may see this idea as very close to Buber's distinction between I-It and I-Thou relation. And indeed such a comparison enables us to issue a real challenge to the individualistic, instrumentalist approach to reality which has been the legacy of the Greek scientific approach to the world of things, the individualism and mechanism which has been the legacy of Descartes and has seen the marginalising of God through a narrow focusing upon the autonomy of the human subject. Buber surveyed in his lifetime the sterility and compartmentalism of modern life, and saw the only answer to be in terms of a whole new method of describing the human situation based on what he saw as humankind's deepest need for a dialogic relationship with God, other persons and things.

If it exists at all the dialogue between theology and philosophy is very often one between theism and atheism. By focusing upon the person Zizioulas has performed an incalculable service to this dialogue by describing accurately the essentially contingent nature of personhood:

"Philosophy can arrive at the confirmation of the reality of the person, but only theology can treat of the genuine, the authentic person, because the authentic person, as absolute ontological freedom, must be 'uncreated', that is, unbounded by any 'necessity', including its own existence. If such a person does not exist in reality, the concept of the person is a presumptuous daydream. If God does not exist, the person does not exist " (Zizioulas p.43).

Buber is making a similar point, but in a more diffuse way and with a more humanistic terminology. But this latter is his strength because he provides a sort of translation of

ideas which put him in the space between theologians and philosophers, and thus offers interpretation to both sides. Such interpretation requires a breadth of sympathy and lack of dogmatism of which Buber would wholeheartedly approve. This possibility can be seen, for example, in the exploration of the event-nature of human existence and the event-nature of faith. Buber has established these through his existential categories of I-Thou and I-It. He rigorously applies his categories to interpersonal relationships and the relationship between human persons and the Eternal Thou. Indeed he is insistent that there can be no distinction between the two. This is his most important contribution to theology and one that Hans Urs von Balthasar generously acknowledges (in Martin Buber and Christianity, London, Harvill Press, 1961). Although this debate may sound somewhat academic, it must be remembered that, as Buber has amply demonstrated, the contemporary objectivistic, individualistic and rationalistic philosophy has entirely permeated the thinking of contemporary humankind. In this context the Church's mission assumes a renewed urgency because, as Zizioulas has observed, only the christian experience has the power to offer freedom from the deadening effect of contemporary culture. Emil Brunner (Truth as Encounter, London, SCM, 1964, originally published as The Divine-Human Encounter; see also Dogmatics, 3 Vols. 1949-1952; also Revelation and Reason, London, SCM, 1947) argues that the main failure in the Church's mission in the post-Reformation period is that the objective, institutional side of the Church and its message has been uppermost, to the detriment of the subjective and personal. With reference to the New Testament Epistles he says:

"The quality of the daily life of the members, expressed in numerous ways, must prove whether God's living word is present and efficacious in a congregation " (op,cit.p.197).

and further, with reference to Melanchthon's doctrine of the Church:

"The personal concept of the Church - which is the only New Testament one - is obscured by the objectivist concept of institution; and the revolutionary perception of Luther - that the Church is nothing other than a fellowship of persons, namely, the believers who through their present Lord, their head, are connected with a body - was again lost " (ibid).

Furthermore, Brunner believed that this objectivist concept of the Church was effectively to blame for the Church no longer seeing itself as a missionary Church. Brunner systematically used Buber's categories in his theology and throughout his academic career encouraged dialogue with the secular world.⁵⁹ Zizioulas, although from a very different tradition, similarly has a vision of progressive dialogue with the secular world based upon a similar personalist vision of the Christian message, and of the Church as a "way of being" or a "mode of existence" (Zizioulas, p 15).

Brunner alleges that the Church turned from personal discipleship based on the personal concept of the Church. His ecclesiology is built upon an open relational ontology which cannot allow ecclesiology, under any circumstances, to revert to a non-personal, objectivistic stance, because such would be a denial of the personal being of God. With such an approach to the secular world, the Christian Gospel may again be seen as relevant to it and its philosophical mouthpieces, as the Gospel is

⁵⁹ See Brunner E. Dogmatics Volume III, London, Lutterworth Press, 1962, especially pp. 159-162,220,277,284 ff. for attestation of Buber; for Brunner's views on dialogue with the world see op,cit. pp.106-116.

allowed to answer the existential needs of humankind. Perhaps a final word may be Buber's, applying his words to the refreshing and innovative ecclesiological perspective provided by Zizioulas which has within it the potential for great theological consensus and a new vision of the Church's task:

"We shall resist those who, invoking the authority of an already existing law, want to keep us from receiving new weapons from the hands of the living God." (On Judaism, New York, Schocken, 1967 p.128).

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